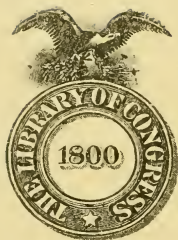


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VALLEY OF THE CONEMAUGH.

BY  
THOMAS J. CHAPMAN.

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ALTOONA, PA.:  
McCRUM & DERN, PRINTERS,  
1865.

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"Lives there a man with soul so dead,  
That never to himself hath said,  
'This is my own, my native land?'"

*Sir Walter Scott.*

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Entered according to an Act of Congress, in the year 1865, by  
THOMAS J. CHAPMAN, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court,  
for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

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To my younger Brother,  
REV. ALVA RILEY CHAPMAN,

This little Volume  
Is Respectfully Inscribed,  
As a Mark of

Esteem and Affection.

To the Hon. Secy of the Navy  
Washington D.C.

Dear Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

## P R E F A C E .

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The scope of this little work is to give an historical and descriptive account of the Valley of the Conemaugh, which embraces the county of Cambria, and a portion of the counties of Somerset, Indiana and Westmoreland. To collect and arrange the facts and incidents which go to make up the book, have required considerable labor and trouble, and, to the critical reader, the author begs leave to say, to borrow the language of Dr. Johnson, in the preface to his English Dictionary, "when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed."

In the prosecution of this little volume the author has been actuated by no idea that he was specially fitted for the task. While so many older men still live, natives of this valley, and better acquainted with its early history, it might seem presumptuous in a young man, not yet out of his twenties, to step

into the field. But there has been no promise of anything of the kind from the hands of these older men, and, meanwhile, the time is passing away, and the scanty materials out of which to form a local history of the Conemaugh valley are yearly growing less and less. The author has gathered up such of the incidents in the early history of this section of the country as have been thought worthy of preservation, and he takes pleasure in thus submitting the results of his labors to the judgment of his readers.

He would also take this occasion to acknowledge his obligations to the many kind friends who have assisted him in the course of the work. These friends have been many. It would be invidious to mention a few where all have been so kind, and he hopes that each one will accept this acknowledgment as personal to himself.

T. J. CHAPMAN.

JOHNSTOWN, PA., July, 1865.



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# THE VALLEY OF THE CONEMAUGH.

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## CHAPTER I.

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### OUTLINES.

The Conemaugh river rises on the western slope of the Alleghenies, near their summit, in the county of Cambria, Pennsylvania, and at about the middle of its eastern boundary. A narrow ridge, not over sixty yards in width, separates the head-waters of this river from those of a branch of the Susquehanna; the one flowing towards the rising and the other towards the setting sun.

The Conemaugh has its origin in little springs upon the mountain's side. As it pursues its meandering course down the declivity, it grows larger and larger by the tributes of other petty streamlets. Near the village of Wilmore it is joined by the North Branch, which rises in the neighborhood of Ebensburg; and here it first takes the name of Conemaugh. A few miles lower down it receives the waters of the South Fork, a creek that has its source in a swamp at the base of the mountain.

The general course of the Conemaugh is

towards the northwest. It is about sixty miles in length, from the confluence of the North Branch, near Wilmore, to Saltsburg, in Indiana county, where it joins the Loyalhanna, and thenceforth changes its name for that of Kiskiminetas. The Conemaugh has two principal tributaries: the Stony Creek, which flows into it at Johnstown, and the Blacklick, which has its *debouche* about two miles below Blairsville. This river traverses Cambria county almost throughout its entire breadth, and then leaving the confines of Cambria, it forms the separating line between the counties of Westmoreland and Indiana.

The valley of the Conemaugh is in general exceedingly wild and uncultivated. Here and there along the shore are to be seen farms of more or less excellence and productiveness; but until we get west of the Chestnut Ridge, we find but little land that is well adapted to cultivation. High hills, crowned with trees, and shielded by corrugated precipices, frown down into the clear waters of the stream. Huge boulders, of thousands of tons' weight, are strewn along the sides of the mountains, which nothing but the hand of God stays from plunging, like an avalanche, into the valleys below.

In the valley between the Laurel Hill and the Chestnut Ridge, however, there is a considerable tract of level, fertile land, which is highly cultivated, and is studded with prosperous villages and smiling farm houses, where peace and plenty sit enthroned.

The Conemaugh cuts its way through two important ridges, outliers of the Alleghenies: the Laurel Hill and the Chestnut Ridge. Its channel through these mountains are narrow, deep defiles, abounding in sublime and beautiful scenery. It is a remark of travelers who have made the grand tour of Europe, that neither the Highlands of Scotland, nor the Alps of Switzerland, excel in beauty, sublimity, and picturesqueness, the mountain passes of the Conemaugh. Especially is this remark appropriate in the fall of the year, when the surrounding hill-sides are clothed in a thousand varied hues and gradations of shade;

“When the sound of dropping nuts is heard,  
Though all the trees are still;”

and when every prospect is mellowed and subdued by the quiet mid-day twilight of Indian Summer. Not so lovely, perhaps, but far more grand is it when the day is dark and tempestuous, to see the heavy clouds dragging their tattered skirts through the tree-tops on the wooded heights, while now and then a tall,

spectral column of mist shoots up from the forest and sails majestically away, until it is lost to view in the dense mass of vapors overhead. Such a scene could have been fittingly described by the graphic pen of Burns.

Below the town of Blairsville, and, in truth, a mile or two above it, the country lying upon this stream changes its aspect somewhat, though steep hill-sides and forbidding precipices are still to be seen at intervals.

Until it reaches Johnstown, the Conemaugh is a very insignificant stream; in many places between that town and Wilmore one could jump across it, as the Irishman could jump across one of the locks on the Regent's canal—in *two jumps*. But by the addition of the waters of the Stony Creek, at Johnstown, the stream assumes more importance, and at once presents quite a river-like appearance. It is true the flinty gripe of the opposing mountains below this town sometimes compresses it, for a short distance, into quite diminutive proportions; but whenever that gripe is removed it expands into a broad, beautiful river.

The old Main Line of Public Works of Pennsylvania lies along this river throughout its whole length. The Pennsylvania canal is mainly fed by its waters—or rather *was* fed

for of this canal, in great part, it may be said as of the city of old King Priam: *Troja fuit*. Commencing at Johnstown, the Portage Railroad, a link in the main line, led across the Allegheny Mountains to Hollidaysburg, conforming more or less, according to circumstances, with the direction of this stream. The Pennsylvania Railroad now supplies the place of the Portage, and runs for the greater part of the way almost parallel with it. It also follows the Conemaugh as far down as the Blairsville Intersection. The railroad, where it passes through the Chestnut Ridge, runs along a narrow path, cut out of the side of the hill, at an immense height. The passenger who looks down into the valley, when the current of air carries the smoke and steam from the locomotive back on the lower side of the train, sees below him only a dense cloud, as though the "iron horse" had turned into a Pegasus, and were cleaving his way towards the sun.

There is a large number of thriving towns and villages situated upon this stream. The largest is Johnstown, at the confluence of Stony Creek and the Conemaugh. Here are erected the largest and most complete iron works in the Union, if not in the world.—



But of this again. Above Johnstown, on this stream, are Conemaugh, Summerhill, and Wilmore. Below Johnstown are Nineveh, New Florence, Centreville, Lockport, Bolivar, Blairsville, Bairdstown, Fillmore, Livermore, and Saltsburg. We shall speak of these, and of some other towns not exactly on the Conemaugh, yet connected with our story, in detail in another chapter.

The people of the Conemaugh valley are engaged in a variety of pursuits. Agriculture is not carried on extensively in a large part of the valley, on account of the character of the soil and surface. In the lower part, from the neighborhood of Blairsville down to the mouth of the river, there is much fine farming land, which is well improved and cultivated. In the vicinity of Johnstown mining, and the manufacture of iron, fire-brick, etc., demand a great deal of attention. The mountains abound with an untold wealth of ore, coal, fire-clay, limestone and other valuable mineral products. Companies are also forming to bore for oil on the Conemaugh, as it is said there are strong indications of the presence of that article.— Though a poor farming country, the valley of this river is rich in mineral treasure beyond the “wealth of Ormus or of Ind.”



Nearly all the nations of Christendom are represented in this district. Americans, English, Irish, Welsh, Scotch, and German, are the principal. It is also favored with a generous sprinkling of the sable sons and daughters of Ham. Some of the townships of Cambria and Somerset counties are peopled almost exclusively by Germans and their descendants; and a kind of *patois*—a mixture of English and German, called by the outsiders “country Dutch”—is the current tongue. The Welsh element is confined almost entirely to Cambria county. There are large numbers of these people in and about Johnstown, brought there by the vast mining interests. They are a quiet, industrious, useful body of citizens. In Johnstown, on a Saturday, one may hear almost as much Welsh and German spoken as English.

There is not much early history connected with the valley of the Conemaugh. No great efforts to form settlements within its boundaries were made until a comparatively recent date. Christian Frederick Post, the messenger of the Government of Pennsylvania to the Indians on the Ohio, passed through it in 1758. On the eleventh day of November of that year he passed over the present site of Johnstown.—Ten years prior to this time, however, in

August, 1748, Conrad Weiser, the Indian agent, and his companion, George Croghan, passed through this region. Christopher Gist, also, the friend of Washington, and his companion in his arduous journey to Fort Le Bœuf, in the fall of 1753, crossed the Allegheny mountains in 1750, and followed the Conemaugh, which he calls the Kiskiminetas, down to its confluence with the Allegheny. Some years elapsed after this ere any settlements were made in the valley of this river. We will speak of them in their proper order.

The principal tributaries of the Conemaugh, as we have said, are the Stony Creek and the Blacklick. The Stony Creek rises in Brothers' Valley township, Somerset county. It flows in a northwesterly direction, and unites with the Conemaugh at Johnstown, in Cambria county. It is about forty miles in length, and receives in its course the waters of the Quemahoning, Shade, Roaring, and Paint Creeks.—This stream irrigates a tract of country better adapted to agricultural purposes than the upper Conemaugh. The soil of Somerset county is in the main highly fertile, and plentiful crops of grain and hay are every year produced. It is also one of the best butter and cheese making districts in the State. Immense quantities of

these staples are every week brought to Johnstown in wagons from this county, to be shipped by railroad to the distant markets.

Among the hills that lie upon this creek and its tributaries ore and coal are found. Some furnaces are erected, which have been a source of much wealth to the county. Large numbers of *shook* are made in this as well as the neighboring counties. By *shook* are meant bundles of staves fitted and bent in the proper manner, but not set up in the form of a cask. From twenty to thirty staves, thus prepared, make a *shook*. These are sent to the West Indies, and other tropical countries, where they are formed into casks, and used to receive the produce of the cane. In Somerset county, large quantities of maple sugar and molasses are also made. This has become a not unimportant source of revenue to the manufacturers, as well as a great advantage to consumers, in the present state of high prices brought on by the war.

Somerset is a large, populous, and wealthy county. It was partly settled at an early period. About the year 1830, the ruins of a house near Stoystown were still pointed out, which was said to have been built in 1758, at the time of General Forbes' expedition against

the Indians. This county is affectionately denominated "Mother Somerset," by the people of the surrounding country.

In 1758, Post, the government messenger, passed through what is now Somerset county. November sixth, of that year, he writes: "One of our horses went back; we hunted a good while for him. Then we set off and found *one of the worst roads that ever was traveled* until Stony Creek. Upon the road we overtook a great number of pack-horses, whereupon Pisquetomen said: 'Brother, now you see if you had not come to us before, this road would not be so safe as it is; now you see we could have destroyed all this people on the road, and great mischief would have been done, if you had not stopt and drawn our people back.'

"We were informed that the general (Forbes) had not yet gone to Fort Du Quesne, whereupon Pisquetomen said he was glad, and expressed himself thus: 'If I can come to our towns before the general makes his attack, I know your people will draw back, and leave the French.'

"We lodged this night at Stony Creek."

This creek, where it empties into the Conemaugh, presents a nobler appearance than the river into which it merges, and for which it changes its name. It reminds us of a large

woman losing her name and her identity by marriage with an attenuated specimen of the *genus homo*. It doesn't look reasonable: though we accept the decree, in the first instance at least, with gratitude, inasmuch as Conemaugh is more euphonious than Stony Creek, and is one of those "sweet Indian names" that a certain set of sentimentalists dote upon.

The Blacklick, the other principal tributary of the Conemaugh, has its rise in the north-western part of Cambria county, and taking a southwestern direction, flows through the county of Indiana, and empties its waters into the river about two miles below the town of Blairsville. At a short distance above Blacklick Station, on the Indiana Branch Railroad, it is joined by the Twolick Creek, which considerably increases its flood. There are various improvements along the Blacklick; many fine farms, numerous mills, and one furnace. The Twolick is augmented by the waters of the Yellow Creek, which are emptied into it at Homer.

At what is now known as Lichenthaler's Ford, on the Blacklick, were discovered, a few years ago, the evidences of a former Indian village. The ground, when first plowed up, was found to be a rich, black mold, such as is



to be found only where men have long been dwelling together, while pieces of broken pottery, and arrow and spear-heads of flint were lying about in great abundance. We have walked over the ground, and picked up these relics of a by-gone age and race. Certain aged persons in the neighborhood could remember a tradition concerning an aboriginal village somewhere in that region, though they never knew the exact locality. Mounds, too, were to be seen in the adjacent woods, such as are said to be the humble mausolea of the red men; but as no one ever had curiosity or public spirit enough to open them, it is not known whether they contain the remains of the rude children of the forest, or whether they have been formed by merely natural causes.

Much of the scenery along the Blacklick is highly picturesque. A great part of the country upon its banks is yet in a state of nature.—Railroads, and modern innovations generally, have not yet penetrated there. Particularly is the scenery near the mouth of the creek grand and beautiful. At the distance of about half a mile from the Conemaugh a well constructed bridge is thrown across the stream. On the right hand side are fine fields, fruitful orchards, and comfortable farm houses. The opposite

side, however, is high and precipitous. A road winds up the side of the acclivity, while above it rise many feet of rocks,

“Crown'd with rough thickets, and a nodding wood.”

Before the advent of the white people, Indian villages were scattered along the shores of the Conemaugh and its tributaries. Here the dusky warriors danced around the camp-fire, and shouted their songs of victory and defiance. Here the Indian mother hushed her children to sleep by chanting the glorious deeds of the red man. The eagle built his aerie upon the rocks, and the bear, the wolf, and the elk inhabited the unbroken wilderness. But all this is changed. Pleasant fields and thriving towns now lie upon the margin of this stream. Forests, it is true, still wave in all their pristine wildness upon the overhanging mountains, but the ringing of the woodman's axe, the shrill whistle of the locomotive, and the ponderous thumping of the forge-hammer have frightened away the Indian and the eagle forever.

## CHAPTER II.

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### EXPEDITIONS AGAINST THE INDIANS.

Pennsylvania, during the middle years of the last century, was a scene of havoc and bloodshed. The Indians, stirred up by the French, who were at war with the English, committed the most horrid excesses upon the defenceless people of the frontier. The tomahawk and the scalping-knife were constantly dripping with the blood of their victims. The glare of burning cabins and barns often lighted up the gloom of midnight.

"Why flames the far summit? Why shoot to the blast  
Those embers, like stars from the firmament cast?  
'Tis the fire-shower of ruin, all dreadfully driven  
From his aerie that beacons the darkness of heaven."

Roving bands of marauders scoured the country far and near, and often fell upon the lonely habitation or the isolated hamlet like a thunderbolt. Under such circumstances it was impossible for the remote settlements of Pennsylvania to prosper. The pioneer was compelled to lay down the axe for the rifle, and the pruning-hook for the sword. These gangs of murderous savages usually made their incursions up the valley of the Conemaugh, and across the mountains to the head-waters of the Susquehanna, and thence down that stream to



the settlements upon its banks. At an early day in the troubles the smoke from no white settler's chimney curled above the forest trees to the west of the Alleghenies.

For the protection of the colonists, and as a war measure against France, the government of England projected several important expeditions against the combined French and Indians in North America. With some of these enterprises we have to do, inasmuch as they very nearly concerned the condition of things in that part of Pennsylvania of which we are treating.

The first of these enterprises, and that around which clusters the greatest interest for us, was the ill-starred expedition under Major General Edward Braddock, in 1755. Braddock had the reputation of a brave and skillful officer. In the early part of the year 1755, he arrived in this country with two regiments of royal troops, the 44th and 48th, under Sir Peter Halkett and Colonel Dunbar. At Fort Cumberland, on Will's Creek, he was joined by about one thousand provincial troops. The army, however, was delayed some weeks for want of means of transportation for their baggage and stores. At length, on the 8th of June, they took up their line of march. Their destination

was Fort Duquesne, at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, on the present site of Pittsburg. This fort was in the possession of the French, who, the year before, had taken it yet unfinished from Ensign Ward.

The progress of Braddock's army was very slow, on account of the nature of the road, and the cumbrous character of their baggage. At the suggestion of George Washington, then a young man who acted as aid-de-camp to Braddock, it was determined to leave the greater part of the baggage under a sufficient escort to follow after by slow and easy marches, and push on a picked force with all speed. The baggage was accordingly left to the care of Colonel Dunbar, while General Braddock, with some twelve or thirteen hundred men, went forward.

In the forenoon of the 9th day of July they crossed over to the left hand side of the Monongahela, a little below the mouth of the Youghioghenny, in order to avoid some hills that obstructed their march. Between twelve and one o'clock, noon, they re-crossed to the right hand side. At the spot where they landed, the ground slopes gently back towards the country, while on each side of the hillock are ravines from eight to ten feet deep. The

whole country was then overgrown with a dense forest, and the ravines were entirely hidden from sight.

As this large army drew near to the place of their destination, the French commandant at the fort was greatly distressed. His force was small, and the fort totally unable to resist the attack of such an army. In this conjuncture, Captain Beaujeu, who, it seems, was a man of great spirit and enterprise, after much persuasion and entreaty, induced a number of French and Indians\* to go out to meet the enemy, and offer such resistance as was in their power. Early on the morning of the 9th they left the fort.

The point where Braddock's army re-crossed the river is within ten miles of the site of Fort Duquesne. It is likely that the party of Beaujeu first came in sight of it at this spot. Nature had already prepared the ground to their advantage, and they at once took their stations in the parallel ravines, without having been seen or heard by the British.—

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\* Various estimates are given of the force of the French and Indians. The largest estimate is, two hundred and fifty French and Canadians, and six hundred and forty Indians. The lowest estimate reduces the number of white men to two hundred and thirty-five, and Indians to six hundred.—*Neville B. Craig, Esq.*

Washington, writing to his mother from Fort Cumberland, 18th July, 1755, nine days after the battle, says: "When we came there we were attacked by a party of French and Indians, whose number I am persuaded did not exceed *three hundred men.*"

Washington, who was acquainted with the Indian mode of warfare, proposed to the general commanding to send out scouts to guard against an ambuscade; but the imperious officer spurned his proposition with contempt.

The troops were crossed in parties of two hundred and three hundred. It was one o'clock. The general, with the last of the men, and the supplies, had gained the opposite shore, and the first detachment had proceeded a short distance up the slope, when they were met by sharp and rapid discharges from hundreds of rifles. They were at once thrown into such confusion and fright, that many of them did not seem to have the use of their senses. Particularly was this the case with the British regulars. Reinforcements were hurried forward to sustain the first detachment, but the panic soon communicated to them also, and they were able to offer but little resistance. Many of them huddled together like frightened sheep, and were mowed down by the fire of the enemy. The provincial troops, who were accustomed to the Indian mode of fighting, sprang behind trees, to fight them on their own terms, but were ordered out by the infatuated Braddock, who even struck some of them with his sword for their cowardice, as he thought it.

Meanwhile the firing was kept up. Men were falling thick and fast on every side. The ground was soon covered with the dead and the dying. And yet the enemy was invisible.—The firing of the troops was by random—often at their own men—while the devouring flame of the enemy's rifles encompassed them on every side. For three hours this horrible carnage raged. Nearly seven hundred men had fallen, when a ball, fired by one of his own soldiers,\* cut short the career of Braddock, and he fell from his horse mortally wounded. With the fall of Braddock ended everything like an attempt at resistance. The few troops who had remained upon the ground now turned and fled, taking the wounded general with them. A few days afterward he died. The enemy pursued the flying host, remorselessly destroying almost all that fell into their hands. A number they reserved for a more cruel fate. They were burnt at the stake the same evening on the return of the savages to Fort Duquesne. The Point, between the Monongahela and the Allegheny rivers, was the scene of their immolation.

The flying soldiery did not stop their retreat until they reached the camp of Colonel Dunbar,

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\* Thomas Fausett, of Fayette county, Pa.

six miles in the rear. They here paused. After destroying nearly all their stores of every kind, the retreat was re-commenced. They returned to Fort Cumberland, their starting-point, on the 22d of the same month. So ended Braddock's expedition.\* The unfortunate termination of this affair undoubtedly was owing entirely to the obstinacy and self-sufficiency of those who had charge of the undertaking.—General Morris wrote on the occasion: "The defeat of our troops appears to me to be owing to the want of care and caution in the leaders, who have been too secure, and held in great contempt the Indian manner of fighting."

The defeat of Braddock subjected the entire frontier to ravage and apprehension. The Indians were more cruel and destructive than ever. In his message to the Assembly, July 24th, 1755, Governor Morris, of Pennsylvania, has the following language in relation to this disaster: "This unfortunate and unexpected change in our affairs deeply affects every one of his majesty's colonies, but none of them in so sensible a manner as this province, which having no militia, is thereby left exposed to the cruel incursion of the French and barbarous

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\*This account I have collated chiefly from Day's Historical Collections of Pennsylvania.



Indians, who delight in shedding human blood, and who make no distinction as to age or sex—as to those who are armed against them, or such as they can surprise in their peaceful habitations—all are alike the objects of their cruelty—slaughtering the tender infant and frightened mother with equal joy and fierceness. To such enemies, spurred by the native cruelty of their tempers, encouraged by their late success, and having now no army to fear, are the inhabitants of this province exposed; and by such must we now expect to be overrun, if we do not immediately prepare for our own defence; nor ought we to content ourselves with this, but resolve to drive to and confine the French to their own just limits.”\*

During the year following the defeat of Braddock, the enemies of the English were permitted to carry on their high-handed outrages almost without rebuke. On the 30th of August, 1756, Colonel John Armstrong, with an army of only three hundred and seven men, marched from Fort Shirley, in what is now Huntingdon county, against Kittanning. This Colonel Armstrong seems to have been one of the most prominent and energetic men on the frontier in that stormy time. Kittanning was

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\* Votes of Assembly, IV, 416.

a famous Indian town upon the Allegheny river, and occupied the site of the present borough of the same name in Armstrong county. It was the headquarters of Captain Jacobs, a notorious Indian chief, and the general depot to which most of the whites whom they captured were transferred.

They reached the town during the night of the sixth of September. As they drew near, they could hear the beating of the drums and the whooping of the warriors, who were having a grand break-down. Their front came to the river, about one hundred perches below the main body of the town, a short time before daylight. They had met with an interruption in their march, in the early part of the night, that had considerably retarded them. About six miles from the town, at what is now called Blanket Hill, they had discovered a party of Indians encamped in the path. It was believed that not more than three or four savages made up the party. They immediately retreated with the greatest possible secrecy to some distance, when, after due deliberation, it was thought best to take a circuitous route, and not meddle with the savages at that time, for, if one should escape, he would alarm the town, and thus perhaps frustrate the object of the expedition.



Lieutenant Hogg, however, with thirteen men, was left, with orders not to attack the Indians until the next morning at break of day, and then, if possible, to cut them off.

Finally, along in the "wee sma' hours ayon the twal," the dusky braves left off their dancing, and fires having been kindled by the squaws in a corn-field near by, for the purpose of dispersing the gnats, the night being very warm, the warriors lay down here to sleep.

By the time Armstrong had made a proper disposition of his men, and everything was got in readiness, the gray light of morning had stolen upon them. A detachment was sent along the top of the hill until they came to a point opposite the body of the town, when they were to make an assault upon it. Supposing that the greater part of the warriors had lodged in the corn-field, a larger force was kept here, but the attack upon it was delayed some twenty minutes, until those who had been sent to the other point should arrive.

At the appointed time the battle commenced. A warm engagement took place in the corn-fields. At the same time the attack upon the houses was begun. Captain Jacobs and those with him, when they beheld the approach of the white men, pretended to be greatly de-

lighted, and cried out, "The white men were at last come, they would then have scalps enough." Their squaws and children, however, they immediately ordered to take refuge in the woods.

The house in which Jacobs and his companions were, was pierced with port-holes, through which they could fire upon the soldiers without themselves being exposed. In this way they killed and wounded a good many. But it was soon determined by Armstrong to set fire to the houses. Before proceeding to do this the Indians were called on to surrender. To this one of them answered, "He was a man and would not be a prisoner." He was then told that he would be burnt to death, but he replied that he did not care, for he would kill four or five before he died. The houses were accordingly set on fire. As the flames progressed, some of the Indians jumped from the windows and tried to make their escape; but they were all shot down.

"During the burning of the houses," says Armstrong, in his official report to Governor Denny, "which were nearly thirty in number, we were agreeably entertained with a quick succession of charged guns gradually firing off as they were reached by the fire; but more so

with the vast explosion of sundry bags and large kegs of gunpowder, wherewith almost every house abounded. The prisoners afterwards informing, that the Indians had frequently said they had a sufficient stock of ammunition for ten years to war with the English. With the roof of Captain Jacobs' house, where the powder blew up, was thrown the leg and thigh of an Indian, with a child of three or four years old, such a hight that they appeared as nothing, and fell into the adjacent corn-field."

Having demolished the town, and killed or chased away the inhabitants, Armstrong and his small army set out to return. Upon their arrival at the Indian encampment of the night before, they found evidences of a sanguinary conflict. The truth was that the scout who had discovered and reported the Indian party had been grossly deceived as to their numbers. When Lieutenant Hogg came to attack them in the morning, he discovered that they greatly outnumbered his own force. A severe fight took place, in which the lieutenant himself received two serious wounds, and had three of his men killed, after which the balance ran off. He then crawled into a thicket of underbrush, where he might have remained in safety, had

not a cowardly sergeant of Captain Mercer's company, with three or four privates, who had run away from the battle at Kittanning, found him and persuaded him to go along with them. They had not gone far together, when they were met by four Indians. Upon sight of them the sergeant and his companions began to flee, notwithstanding the lieutenant urged them to stand their ground like men. Here he was again wounded, and he died shortly afterward.

Colonel Armstrong returned to Fort Littleton, in Bedford county, about the 13th of September. He had lost in all forty-nine men—killed, seventeen; wounded, thirteen; missing, nineteen. The fall of Kittanning was a heavy stroke upon the savages and their French allies.

In the fall of 1758, another expedition against Fort Duquesne was undertaken by General Forbes. Colonel Bouquet commanded under him, and the expedition is often spoken of as Bouquet's expedition. Colonel Washington had command of the troops from Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland. The whole force under Forbes consisted of about seven thousand men. The early part of the autumn had been devoted to cutting a new road over the mountains.

On the 23d or 24th of October, General Forbes, with the rear division of the army, left Bedford, then called Raystown, and advanced towards Loyalhanna. Colonel Bouquet had reached the same point some weeks before. In the interval he had sent out Major Grant, of the Highlanders, with a force of about eight hundred and fifty men, to reconnoitre the fort and the adjacent country. He was instructed not to approach too near the fort, and to avoid a collision with the enemy, if possible. But the impetuosity of Grant, and the glory of seizing the fort himself, led him to transcend his orders. At eleven o'clock at night of the third day after their departure, he, with the principal part of his little force, stood upon the brow of a hill that overlooked the fort, and not above a quarter of a mile from it.

For various reasons Major Grant supposed that the number of the enemy was very small—not exceeding two hundred. Shortly after daybreak, Captain McDonald's company was sent, with drums beating, directly towards the fort, for the purpose of drawing them out.—But the major had reckoned without his host. As soon as the garrison were aroused from their slumbers by the music of the enemy, they sallied out in great numbers to the attack. A

desperate struggle then ensued, in which the invaders, after dreadful slaughter, were driven from the field, and Grant himself was taken prisoner. The hill upon which this affray was commenced is still known as Grant's Hill.— This battle was fought on the 14th of September, and the losses to Grant's force amounted to over three hundred men.

This victory so emboldened the enemy that they determined to attack the army under Bouquet, at Loyalhanna, before he should be strengthened by the division under Forbes. Accordingly, a force of fourteen hundred French and Indians, under the command of De Vetri, assailed him on the 12th of October. They fought with great desperation and fury, but after a conflict of four hours they were compelled to retire with considerable loss. They renewed the attack after night-fall; but a few well-directed shells thrown into their midst had the effect of dispersing them.

The army pursued its way by very slow degrees. The weather was very unfavorable, and the roads, as fast as made, were rendered almost impassable by the heavy rains. At length, on the 25th of November, they reached the fort, but found it little more than a black and smouldering ruin. The enemy, upon the



near approach of the British, had destroyed it and then fled. There were two magazines, one of which had been blown up and ruined; in the other were found a large quantity of ammunition, gun barrels, iron, and a wagon-load of scalping-knives. But little else remained.

The capture of Fort Duquesne sent a thrill of joy through every heart upon the frontier. It had long been one of the most important strongholds of the French in the west. Much blood and treasure had been spent in efforts to take it, but its importance to the people overbalanced every other consideration. It secured to the Anglo-Saxon race the key to the Mississippi valley forever.

Governor Denny, in his Message to the Assembly on this occasion, says: "Gentlemen—I have the Pleasure to Lay before you a Letter lately received from Brigadier General Forbes, with the interesting and important Account of his Success in the Expedition against his Majesty's Enemies to the Westward, An Event which, it is true, has been purchased at a Considerable present Expence, but when the Consequences are coolly weighed and Considered, of suffering the French to lay the Foundation of our Future Slavery, by possessing

themselves and fortifying the back Parts of his Majesty's Colonies on this Continent, and to keep open a Communication between their Settlements from Canada to the Mississippi, I am persuaded every real Friend of Liberty will think this Conquest could not have been too dearly bought. \* \* \* \* \* The great Advantages that will attend this success of his Majesty's Arms, will be sensibly felt by all the British Colonies, but none so much as this Province, whose Inhabitants have been the most exposed to the Incursions and Cruelties of the French and their Allies from that Quarter."\*

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\* See Colonial Records, Vol. VIII, p. 257.



## CHAPTER III.

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### THE SETTLEMENT OF THE VALLEY.

With the taking of Kittanning, and the fall of Fort Duquesne, as related in the preceding chapter, did not come peace and safety to the Pennsylvania backwoodsmen. By no means. Though these successes on the part of the British greatly discomfited and crippled their inexorable foes, the savage red man and his scarce less savage accomplices continued to murder and devastate whenever and wherever they could.

But the star of empire has ever been westward. The old fort of Duquesne was repaired and improved, and named after the immortal Pitt. A little village soon clustered about it. Settlements gradually crept out into the wilderness, and as the red man's power waned the white man's power continued to increase.

In the course of time settlers made their way into the valley of the Conemaugh. Who was the first it is difficult to say. Among the first, however, were the Maguires, Nagles, Ragers, Storms, Campbells, Hildebrands, Altmans, and

Davises. Favorable reports must have been transmitted by these primitive settlers to their friends and *quondam* neighbors in the older settlements; for the country was speedily dotted by the "clearings" of the hardy backwoodsmen. In the course of a few years the population had become so great that new counties were formed. Of these Westmoreland, which we consider as partly belonging to the Conemaugh valley, inasmuch as that stream forms its northeastern boundary, was the first. It was erected out of Bedford county by act of February 26th, 1773. It then embraced the entire southwestern corner of the State. "Previous to the year 1758, Westmoreland was a wilderness, trodden only by the wild beast, the savage, and an occasional white trader, or frontier-man. The access to the Forks of the Ohio, in those days, was either up the Juniata and then by water down the Kiskiminnetas, [Conemaugh,] or by Braddock's road from Virginia, and thence down the Monongahela. The first opening through the wilderness of Westmoreland county was cut by General Forbes' army, in 1758. \* \* This road opened the way for numerous pioneers into this region; but it was only safe for them to live under the protection of the forts."\* Loyalhanna, now

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\*Day's Hist. Col., pp. 680, 681

Ligonier, seems to have been a base of military operations as far back as the time of Forbes' expedition. By a singular error this place has been located by some writers as only *five miles* west of Bedford.\* After the defeat of Major Grant, at Fort Duquesne, the French and Indians, under De Vetri, assailed Colonel Bouquet at this place, as we have already seen. A few years later, perhaps about 1760, a fort was built here, called Fort Ligonier. During Pontiac's war, in 1763, this fort was attacked by a strong force of Indians. They had also invested Fort Pitt at the same time. Lieutenant Blane, then in command at Ligonier, though his force was very small, bravely defended the fort, and the savages were repulsed. Colonel Bouquet, advancing from Carlisle with two regiments of troops, was met by the united forces of the Indians near Bushy Run, and after an obstinate engagement of one entire afternoon and a part of the next day, succeeded in totally defeating and routing the savages, and compelling them to abandon their designs against the forts.

Hannastown, some three or four miles from the present site of Greensburg, was one of the earliest settlements in Westmoreland county. It was built on the road made by General

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\* See Hist. Six Counties, p. 568.

Forbes, in 1758. When the county was erected in 1773, the courts were directed to be held in this place. It contained about thirty habitations of different descriptions, a wooden court house and jail, and a fort stockaded with logs. Arthur St. Clair, Esq.,\* afterward a conspicuous general in the Revolutionary and Indian wars, was the first prothonotary and clerk of the courts, and Robert Hanna, Esq., was the first presiding justice. During the war of the revolution, Hannastown was the headquarters of Colonel Archibald Lochry, Lieutenant of Westmoreland county. It was thus a conspicuous town in the early history of Western Pennsylvania.

On the 13th of July, 1782, the Indians made a descent on Hannastown. The frontier northwest of the town was almost deserted; the inhabitants had fled for safety and repose to the older settlements. There was, therefore, but little impediment to the Indians, either by way of resistance, or even of giving warning of their approach. The savages first made their appearance at a harvest-field, about a mile and a half north of the village, where a party of the townsfolk were engaged in reaping. Upon discovering the Indians the whole reaping party ran for the town, each one intent upon

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\*See sketch of his life, chapter X.

his own safety. The scene which then presented itself may more readily be conceived than described. Fathers seeking for their wives and children, and children calling upon their parents and friends, and all hurrying in a state of consternation to the fort. The Indians were not long in reaching the town; but fortunately not until the inhabitants were about all safely in the fort. As the savages emerged into the open space around the town, sounding the dreaded war-whoop and brandishing their tomahawks, a young man named David Shaw, who had not yet entered the fort, resolved to make one of them give his death halloo, and raising his rifle to his eye, his bullet whizzed true, for the stout savage at whom he aimed bounded into the air and fell upon his face. Then, with the speed of an arrow, Shaw fled for the fort and entered in safety. The Indians were exasperated when they found the town deserted, and after pillaging the houses they set them on fire. Although a considerable part of the town was within rifle range of the fort, the whites did but little execution, being more intent on their own safety than solicitous about destroying the enemy. One savage, who had put on the military coat of one of the inhabitants, paraded himself so ostentatiously

that he was shot down. Except this one, and the one laid low by Shaw, there was no evidence of any other execution, but some human bones found among the ashes of one of the houses where they, it was supposed, burnt those that were killed. There were not more than fourteen or fifteen rifles in the fort; and a company having marched from the town some time before, in Lochry's ill-fated campaign, many of the most efficient men were absent; not more than twenty or twenty-five remained. A maiden, Jennet Shaw, was killed in the fort; a child having run opposite the gate, in which there were some apertures through which a bullet from the Indians occasionally whistled, she followed it, and as she stooped to pick it up a bullet entered her bosom—she thus fell a victim to her kindness of heart. The savages, with their wild yells and hideous gesticulations, exulted as the flames spread, and looked like demoniacs rejoicing over the lost hopes of mortals.

From Hannastown the Indians went to Miller's Station, two miles south of the town. Here were a number of families who had fled for safety from their homes on the extreme border. There had been a wedding here the day before. Love is a delicate plant, but will



take root in the midst of perils in gentle bosoms. A young couple, fugitives from the frontier, fell in love and were married. The bridal party were enjoying themselves in the principal mansion, without the least shadow of approaching danger. Some men were mowing in the meadow—people in the cabins were variously occupied—when suddenly the war-whoop, like a clap of thunder from a cloudless sky, broke upon their astonished ears. The people in the cabins and those in the meadow mostly made their escape. At the principal mansion the party were so agitated by the cries of women and children, mingling with the yells of the savages that all were for a moment irresolute, and that moment sealed their fate. John Brownlee and his family were there. This individual was well known in frontier forage and scouting parties. His courage, activity, generosity, and manly form won for him among his associates, as they win everywhere, confidence and attachment. Many of the Indians were acquainted with his character—some of them probably had seen his person. After that first moment of terror had passed, Brownlee made his way to the door, having seized a rifle; he saw, however, that it was a desperate game, but made a rush at

some Indians who were entering the gate. The shrill, clear voice of his wife, exclaiming, "Jack, will you leave me?" instantly recalled him, and he sat down beside her at the door, yielding himself a willing victim. The party were made prisoners, including the bridegroom and bride, and several of the family of Miller.

Longfellow, in his beautiful poem of "Evangeline," nearly describes this scene:

"As, when the air is serene in the sultry solstice of summer,  
Suddenly gathers a storm, and the deadly sling of the hailstones  
Beats down the farmer's corn in the field and shatters his windows,  
Hiding the sun, and strewing the ground with thatch from the  
house-roofs,  
Bellowing fly the herds, and seek to break their inclosures;  
So on the hearts of the people descended the words of the speaker.  
Silent a moment they stood in speechless wonder, and then rose  
Louder and ever louder a wail of sorrow and anger."

Heavy were the hearts of the women and maidens as they were led into captivity. Who can tell the bitterness of their sorrow? They looked, as they thought, for the last time upon the dear fields of their country, and of civilized life. They had proceeded about half a mile, and four or five Indians near the group of prisoners in which was Brownlee, were observed to exchange rapid sentences among each other, and look earnestly at him. Some of the prisoners had named him; and, whether it was from that circumstance or because some of the Indians had recognized his person, it was evident



that he was a doomed man. He stooped slightly to adjust his child on his back, which he carried in addition to the baggage that they had put upon him; and, as he did so, one of the Indians who had looked so earnestly at him, stepped to him hastily and buried a tomahawk in his head. When he fell, the child was quickly dispatched by the same individual. One of the women captives screamed at this butchery, and the same bloody instrument and ferocious hand immediately ended her agony of spirit. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and he enabled Mrs. Brownlee to bear that scene in speechless agony of woe. Their bodies were found the next day by the settlers, and interred where they fell. As the shades of evening began to fall, the marauders met again on the plains of Hannastown. They retired into the low grounds about the Crabtree creek, and there regaled themselves on what they had stolen. It was their intention to attack the fort the next morning before the dawn of day.

At nightfall, some thirty settlers assembled at George's Farm, not far from Miller's, determined that night to give what assistance they could to the people in the fort at Hannastown. They set off, each with his trusty rifle, some on horseback and some on foot. With the great-

est precaution they marched to the gate, and were most joyfully welcomed by those within. It was the general opinion that the Indians intended to make an attack the next morning; and, as there were but about forty-five rifles in the fort, and about fifty-five or sixty men, the contest was considered extremely doubtful, considering the great superiority of numbers on the part of the savages. It became, therefore, a matter of the first importance to impress the enemy with a belief that large reinforcements were arriving. For that purpose, the horses were mounted by active men and brought full trot over the bridge of plank that was across the ditch which surrounded the stockading. This was frequently repeated. Two old drums were found in the fort, which were new braced, and music on the fife and drum was kept occasionally going during the night. While marching and countermarching, the bridge was frequently crossed on foot by the whole garrison. These measures had the desired effect. The military music from the fort, the trampling of the horses, and the marching over the bridge, were borne on the silence of night over the low lands of the Crabtree, and the sounds carried terror into the bosoms of the cowardly savages. They feared the retri-

bution which they deserved, and fled shortly after midnight. Three hundred Indians, and about sixty white savages in the shape of refugees, that day crossed the Crabtree, with the intention of destroying Hannastown and Miller's Station. The next day, a number of the whites pursued the trail as far as the Kiskiminetas without being able to overtake them.

The little community, which had now no homes but what the fort supplied, looked out on the ruins of the town with the deepest sorrow. It had been to them the scene of heartfelt joys—embracing the intensity and tenderness of all which renders the domestic hearth and family altar sacred. By degrees they all sought themselves places where they might, like Noah's dove, find rest for the soles of their feet. The lots of the town, either by sale or abandonment, became merged in the adjoining farm; and the labors of the husbandman soon effaced what time might have spared.

The prisoners were surrendered by the Indians to the British in Canada. After the peace of 1783, they were delivered up, and returned to their country.\*

Greensburg was laid out shortly after the

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\* This account of the burning of Hannastown, I have condensed from a well-written article first published in the "Greensburg Argus," in 1836, and thence copied into Day's Hist. Col.

destruction of Hannastown. It was incorporated as early as February, 1799. Its growth for half a century was very gradual. In 1850, the population was scarcely one thousand. It is surrounded by a highly fertile and well cultivated country. Old Westmoreland is the garden of Western Pennsylvania. The Pittsburgh and Bedford turnpike passes through the town, and this gave it some advantages. In it are a fine court house and other county buildings. The Pennsylvania Railroad now passes along the edge of the town. Since the construction of this thoroughfare, the town has improved considerably. Judge Lobengeir, Dr. Postlethwaite, Mr. Campbell, and Mr. McLellan were among the earliest settlers in Greensburg. General Arthur St. Clair, of Revolutionary fame, lies buried in the Presbyterian churchyard. In 1832, the Masonic fraternity placed a monument over his grave, with the following inscriptions:

*On the South Side.*—"The earthly remains of Major General ARTHUR ST. CLAIR, are deposited beneath this humble monument, which is erected to supply the place of a nobler one, due from his country. He died Aug. 31, 1818, in the 84th year of his age."

*On the North Side.*—"This stone is erected

over the remains of their departed brother, by members of the Masonic Society."

The citizens of Greensburg have ever been a highly moral and intelligent people. Very early in this century, about 1805 or 1806, Messrs. Snowden & McCorkle established a newspaper in this town, called "The Farmers' Register." It was neutral in politics, and ably edited for that period. Greensburg is the home of Hon. Edgar Cowan, U. S. Senator, Hon. Henry D. Foster, Democratic candidate for governor in 1860, and other prominent public men. The town is beautifully situated in a fine agricultural district, and within less than an hour's ride of Pittsburg.

Somerset county was the next county erected in the Conemaugh valley. It was organized by act of April 17th, 1795. It had formerly constituted a part of Bedford county. The region of country now embraced in Somerset county was visited by white adventurers and traders at a comparatively remote period. We have already referred to Frederick Post's journey through it in 1758. John Evans, Alexander Magenty, and others, had penetrated these wilds as long ago as 1740. About 1752, Evans, with others, fell into the hands of the savages. They were carried to Quebec,

and from thence sent to Rochelle, in France, where they were released by the English ambassador, and by him sent to London, and from thence they got a passage to Philadelphia. Magenty, while on his return from a trading expedition to the Cuttawa Indians, who were in alliance with the crown of Great Britain, was taken prisoner on the 26th of January, 1753, by a party of French Indians of the Cagnawaga nation, near the Kentucky river. The Indians beat and abused him in the most barbarous manner, and then sent him to Montreal. His release was effected by the mayor of Albany, by paying a considerable sum of money to the Indians who had captured him, and in the fall of 1753, he returned to Philadelphia in destitute circumstances.\* In 1758, a road was cut through the northeastern part of the county by Colonel Bouquet, under the command of General Forbes, and in October of that year an army of six thousand men marched over this road on their way to Fort Duquesne. Shortly after the fall of that Indian stronghold, settlements were commenced within the limits of Somerset county. We have already mentioned the ruins of a house visible to within a very recent period,

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\* Votes of Assembly, Vol. IV.



which was said to have been built about this time. A fort was built at Stoystown, and a breastwork at the forks of the road on the Allegahny mountains. During the Indian troubles of 1763, the little garrison at Stoystown was called in to strengthen the fort at Bedford.\*

Berlin, in Brothers' Valley township, was one of the first settlements in this county. It was settled by the Germans, many of whom were Dunkards. The inhabitants of the more exposed parts of the country frequently fled hither to escape the "murderous tomahawk" of the Indians.

Somerset, the county seat, was laid out by Mr. Bruner, in 1795. It was for some time called Brunerstown. It was incorporated by act of 1804, and a supplementary act of 1807. It is a pleasant town, surrounded by a fine agricultural district, and enjoys the advantages of pure mountain air and water. The turnpike from Bedford to Washington passes through the town.

The first settlers about Somerset were Mr. Bruner, the founder of the town, Mr. Philson, and Mr. Husband. During the whisky rebellion, in 1794, the citizens of this county took no very active part, though they were generally

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\* Hist. Col., p. 617.

secretly opposed to the excise. Mr. Philson and Mr. Husband were more bold in the expression of their sentiments, and were, in consequence, arrested, sent to Philadelphia, and imprisoned. Mr. Husband died in Philadelphia, after enduring an imprisonment of about eight months. Mr. Philson was released.\*

On the 16th of October, 1833, a destructive fire swept over the town of Somerset, and laid a large part of it in ashes. An extra of the "Somerset Patriot" of that day, after describing the origin, and so forth, of the fire, goes on to say: "We have no means of ascertaining the loss—it must be immense. Upwards of *thirty families* are turned homeless in the streets. The part of the town which is now in ashes, was the most business doing and populous, as well as most valuable—Stores, Offices, Shops, Taverns—all have been consumed. Some private families have lost their all. Some have saved much of their furniture. We would suppose the whole loss, not less than *one hundred thousand dollars*." Public meetings were held throughout the country, and resolutions of condolence were passed, and still stronger testimonials of sympathy in the shape of contributions for the sufferers were liberally and cheerfully made.†

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\* Hist. Col., p. 618.

† Ebensburg Sky, Nov. 7, 1833.



Indiana county was erected out of parts of Westmoreland and Lycoming counties by act of March 30th, 1803. This region of country was explored as long ago as 1766-67. The first attempt at making a settlement in the limits of this county is believed to have been made in the year 1769, in the forks of the Conemaugh and Blacklick. The early adventurers into this section were particularly well pleased with the tract of country in the immediate neighborhood of the present town of Indiana.

In 1771 or 1772, three or four years before the breaking out of the American Revolution, Fergus Moorhead and James Kelly had erected their log cabins here. The late lamented R. B. McCabe, Esq.,\* of Blairsville, has recorded the following incident in the history of these two hardy pioneers:

“So soon as the cabins were finished, each of these adventurers betook himself at night to his castle. One morning Mr. Moorhead paid a visit to his neighbor Kelly, and was surprised to find near his cabin traces of blood and tufts of human hair. Kelly was not to be found. Moorhead, believing him to have been killed by the wolves, was cautiously looking about for his remains, when he discovered him

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\* See sketch of his life, Chap. X.

sitting by a spring, washing the blood from his hair.

“He had lain down in his cabin at night and fallen asleep; a wolf reached through a crack between the logs, and seized him by the head. This was repeated twice or thrice before he was sufficiently awakened to shift his position. The smallness of the crack and the size of his head prevented the wolf from grasping it so far as to have a secure hold, and that saved his life.”

Moses Chambers, an old British man-of-war's-man, was one of the first settlers in this wild region. Moses forsook his calling upon the high seas, and sought adventures of another kind in the wilds of our Pennsylvania forests. We, of these times, have but a faint idea of the dangers, privations, and vicissitudes which environed the hardy settlers of these early days. The following incident in the life of Chambers well illustrates the nature of the difficulties with which the settlers of our country had to contend:

“Moses continued to work on his improvement till he was told one morning that the last johnnycake was at the fire! What was to be done? There was no possibility of a supply short of Conococheague. He caught his

horse and made ready. He broke the johnny-cake in two pieces, and giving one-half to his wife, the partner of his perils and his fortunes, he put up the other half in the lappet of his coat with thorns, and turned his horse's head to the east. There were no inns on the road in those days, nor a habitation west of the mountains, save, perhaps, a hut or two at Fort Ligonier. The Kittanning path was used to Ligonier, and from thence the road made by General Forbes' army. Where good pasture could be had for his horse, Moses tarried and baited. To him day was as night, and night as the day. He slept only while his horse was feeding, nor did he give rest to his body nor ease to his mind, until he returned with his sack stored with corn.

"How forcibly would the affecting story of the patriarch Jacob apply itself to the condition of families thus circumstanced! 'Jacob said to his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? and he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt; get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live and not die.' " \*

Some eight or ten years after the settlement of Moses Chambers in this remote country,

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\* R. B. McCabe, Esq.

William Bracken built a mill on the Blacklick, which was an incalculable advantage to the settlers. No more wearisome journeys to Conococheague! Bracken's mill speedily became a cynosure to all within a radius of many miles, and the narrow paths which led to it might have been seen winding through the green forests in every direction.

The settlement of Indiana county was very gradual. The savages made frequent inroads into the quiet retreats of the settlers, murdering or driving them off. We continue to quote, with some variations of language and order, from Mr. M'Cabe's valuable sketch. About the year 1774, Samuel Moorhead commenced building a mill on Stony Run, but before it was completed, the settlers were driven off by the Indians. They fled to what was then called the Sewickly settlement. This was called Dunmore's war; by some of the old settlers it was called the civil war. This war was brought about in this manner: In 1774, Lord Dunmore, of Virginia, set up the unfounded pretension that the western boundary of Pennsylvania did not include Pittsburg and the Monongahela river, and many settlers were encouraged to take up lands on Virginia warrants. He even took possession of Fort Pitt, by his agent,

Conolly, on the withdrawal of the royal troops by order of General Gage. Even General Washington, who knew that country so well, and had taken up much land in it, entertained the idea probably at that date, that what are now the counties of Fayette, Greene, and Washington, were in Virginia. Some of these new settlers were of the worst class of frontiersmen, and two of them, Cresap and Greathouse, were concerned in the barbarous murder of the family of Logan, "the friend of the white man." A bloody war upon the frontier was the consequence of these murders.\* The settlers in Indiana county who were thus compelled to flee, lost their cattle and their crops. However, they returned to their improvements in the fall, and Moorhead completed his mill. This was perhaps the second mill erected within the bounds of what is now Indiana county.

At this time the Indians were living on the Allegheny river. They had a town called Hickorytown, another called Mahoning, and another called Punxutawney. At their leisure, and they continued to have a good deal, they stole the white men's horses, and showed no symptoms of doubtful character as to their feelings towards their new neighbors.

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\*Day's Hist. Col., p. 33.

In 1776, when the blast of war, wide-spread and destructive, swept over the land, it penetrated even the seclusion of this remote wilderness. The Indians again became openly hostile. No further improvements, it is believed, were attempted. The settler laid down the axe, and took up the rifle of the soldier. One courageous pioneer, John Thompson, erected a block-house some six miles northeast of the present town of Indiana, and here he continued to reside throughout all the troubles on the frontier. Not until after Wayne's treaty, in 1795, were any improvements of importance attempted. As late as 1800, not a single town existed in the county, if we except a few cabins that stood where Saltsburg now stands.—Greensburg, in Westmoreland county, was the nearest trading town.\*

Among the first villages in Indiana county was one called Newport, which stood on the right bank of the river, about a mile below the mouth of the Blacklick. When or by whom built is a mystery. It was a matter of tradition in our childhood. Old settlers affirm that it was in a state of decay more than fifty years since. We remember years ago to have seen a solitary house, tenantless and dilapidated,

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\*Day's Hist. Col., p. 377.



still remaining. Of course it had the reputation of being haunted. One who passed by it on a remarkably dark night afterward declared that he had seen a strange, murky light flaring through the sashless windows and the chinks in the walls. Doubtless the hobgoblins held their midnight revels there. Had that timid wayfarer drawn nigher he might have been blest with such a sight as that which greeted the eyes of Tam O'Shanter in the auld kirk of Alloway.

After the old house had departed a lone chimney continued to stand for years, not so tall and graceful as Pompey's Pillar, perhaps, yet serving very well to mark the site of the abandoned hamlet. But even this last vestige has disappeared, and the stones of which it was constructed have been built into a fence by the owner of the land. In another generation Newport will be as hard to locate as Tadmor in the Wilderness.

The town of Indiana was laid out in 1805. A tract of 250 acres was granted for the purposes of a town by George Clymer. The turnpike from Kittanning to Ebensburg passes through the town. In 1856, the Blairsville Branch Railroad was extended to this place. This has had the effect to cause great improve-

ments to be made in it. The town has suddenly grown from being a small, out-of-the-way place, to be an important business point. It contains a fine court house, several elegant churches and hotels, a large number of first-class stores, and many elegant private residences. There is here also an extensive establishment for the manufacture of straw boards. The town is finely located in the midst of a superior agricultural district, and the people have ever been noted for their intelligence, morality, and enterprise.

The manufacture of salt has long been a prosperous business in this county. These salt-wells are principally to be found along the bank of the Conemaugh. The existence of salt water in this section was indicated by the oozing of water, slightly brackish, through the fissures of the rocks. About the year 1813, when salt, in consequence of the war, was extravagantly high, Mr. William Johnston, an enterprising gentleman, determined to perforate the rock, and ascertain whether there was not some valuable fountain from whence all these ooziings issued. He commenced operations on the bank of the Conemaugh, near the mouth of the Loyalhanna, and persevered until he had reached the depth of 450 feet, when he struck



an abundant fountain, strongly impregnated with salt. He immediately proceeded to tubing the perforation to exclude the fresh water, erecting furnaces, pans, and other fixtures, and was soon in the full tide of successful experiment, making about thirty bushels per day, all of which was eagerly purchased at a high price.

Mr. Johnston's success induced others to embark in the business, most of whom were successful. Very soon the hitherto silent and solitary banks of the river were all bustle, life, and enterprise.\* The canal which was afterwards made to pass through this region, brought the most available means of transportation to these works, and salt formed one of the chief staples of commerce of that section, and was carried to every part of the country. About the year 1825, a salt well was sunk on the left bank of the river, a short distance above the mouth of the Blacklick, but, to the grief of all the parties interested, instead of finding a gushing fountain of salt water, the well poured out nothing but a stream of *dirty-looking oil*, very offensive in its smell, and of no conceivable use whatever. The well was then covered up, and abandoned. This is now believed to have

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\*Hazard's Register, 1831.

been petroleum oil, and great pains have been taken lately to find the exact spot where this well was sunk, but so far in vain.

Cambria county was taken from Somerset and Huntingdon by act of March 26th, 1804. Some have thought that the first settlements in the limits of this county were made about the year 1789; but from the following incident it would seem that settlements were attempted here some years before this:

About December, 1777, a number of families came into the fort (at Bedford) from the neighborhood of Johnstown. Amongst them were Samuel Adams, one Thornton and Bridges. After the alarm had somewhat subsided, they agreed to return to their property. A party started with pack horses, reached the place, and not seeing any Indians, collected their property and commenced their return. After proceeding some distance, a dog belonging to one of the party, showed signs of uneasiness, and ran back. Bridges and Thornton desired the others to wait whilst they would go back for him. They went back, and had proceeded but two or three hundred yards, when a body of Indians, who had been lying on each side of the way, but who had been afraid to fire on account of the number of the whites,

suddenly rose up and took them prisoners. The others, not knowing what detained their companions, went back after them; when they arrived near the spot the Indians fired on them, but without doing any injury. The whites instantly turned and fled, excepting Samuel Adams, who took a tree and began to fight in the Indian style. In a few minutes, however, he was killed, but not without doing the same fearful service for his adversary. He and one of the Indians shot and killed each other at the same moment. When the news reached the fort, a party volunteered to visit the ground. When they reached it, although the snow had fallen ankle deep, they readily found the bodies of Adams and the Indian; the face of the latter having been covered by his companions with Adams' hunting shirt.\* This bloody encounter is said to have taken place on Sandy Run, about eight miles east of Johnstown. Authorities differ, however, both as to the date of the occurrence, and the manner in which the actors in the tragedy made away with each other; some affirming that it took place about the year 1785, and that Adams and the Indian killed each other with their knives while fighting round a white-oak tree.†

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\*Day's Hist. Col., pp. 122, 123

† A. J. Hite's "Hand-Book of Johnstown, for 1856," p. 19.

In the year 1789, the Rev. D. A. Gallitzin\* directed his course to the Alleghany mountain, and found that portion of it which now constitutes Cambria county a perfect wilderness, almost without inhabitants or habitations.† He chose to settle where the village of Loretto now stands, and by his labors and munificence he attracted about him a little colony of pioneers that has now grown to be a numerous and wealthy population. Among these early settlers were Captain Michael Maguire, Cornelius Maguire, Richard Nagle, William Dotson, Michael Rager, James Alcorn, John Storm, and others. Of these, Captain Maguire is believed to have been the first. He came here in 1790. The others followed soon after. These were the right kind of men to people a country, for one of them at least, Mr. Rager, is said to have left no less than twenty-seven children! Under the auspices of these settlers, the country improved very rapidly. The first grist mill in the country was built by Mr. John Storm.

Robert L. Johnson, Esq., of Ebensburg, who is, perhaps, better acquainted with the early history of this county than any other man in it, and from whom we have borrowed the

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\* See sketch of his life, Chap. X.

† See Mountaineer, May 14th, 1840.

principal part of the above items, in the year 1840 published in the Ebensburg "Mountain-  
eer," of which he was editor, a series of articles, from which we extract the following:

"Previous to the year 1789, the tract of country which is now included within the limits of Cambria county was a wilderness. 'Frankstown settlement,' as it was then called, was the frontier of the inhabited parts of Pennsylvania east of the Alleghany mountains. None of the pioneers had yet ventured to explore the eastern slope of the mountain. A remnant of savage tribes still prowled through the forests, and seized every opportunity of destroying the dwellings of the settlers, and butchering such of the inhabitants as were so unfortunate as to fall into their hands. The howling of the wolf, and the shrill screaming of the catamount or American panther, mingled in nightly concert with the war-whoop of the savages.

"The hardships endured by the first settlers are almost incredible. Exposed to the inclemency of an Alleghany winter, against the rigor of which their hastily erected and scantily furnished huts afforded a poor protection, their sufferings were sometimes almost beyond endurance. Yet with the most unyielding

firmness did these men persevere, until they secured for themselves and their posterity the inheritance which the latter at present enjoy.

“There was nothing that could be dignified with the name of *road* by which the early settlers might have an intercourse with the settlements of Huntingdon county. A miserable Indian path led from the vicinity of where Loretto now stands, and intersected the road leading to Frankstown, two or three miles this side of the Summit.

“Many anecdotes are related by the citizens of Allegheny township of the adventures of their heroic progenitors among the savage beasts, and the more savage Indians, which then infested the neighborhood. The latter were not slow to seize every opportunity of aggression which presented itself to their blood-thirsty minds, and consequently the inhabitants held not only property, but life itself, by a very uncertain tenure. The truth of the following story is vouched for by many of the most respectable citizens in Alleghany and Cambria townships, by one of whom it has kindly been furnished us for publication: A Mr. James Alcorn had settled in the vicinity of the spot where Loretto now stands, and had built a hut, and cleared a potato patch,



at some distance from it. The wife of Mr. Alcorn went an errand to see the potatoes, and did not return. Search was immediately made, but no trace could be found to lead to her discovery. What became of her is to this day wrapped in mystery, and in all human probability, we shall remain in ignorance of her fate. It was generally supposed that she had been taken by the savages; and it was even reported that she had returned several years after; but this story is not credited by any in the neighborhood."

After Loretto, Johnstown is believed to have been the first spot settled in Cambria county. A few years afterward, about 1795, a number of Welsh emigrants located themselves upon the banks of the Blacklick, in this county. The spot which they chose was eminently adapted to the purposes of a village. The climate was salubrious; the scenery around attractive; the land in the neighborhood highly productive, while its interior was full of the most valuable minerals; the water in the springs and streams was as pure and sparkling as the fount of Castaly, and the grand old woods on every side nodded their green heads in welcome to those early pioneers. The village was properly laid out in streets and alleys, and bore the



name of Beulah. It was rapidly built up, and improvements of all kinds were inaugurated. Religious and literary societies were formed, and an enterprising disciple of Faust and Franklin established a newspaper in the little colony. This primitive sheet rejoiced in the name of the "Western Sky." It has since been rolled together as a scroll, and disappeared. The people of Beulah were an honest, energetic, independent race, and deserved to be, as they were, prosperous.

Upon the organization of Cambria county, in 1804, Beulah contended with Ebensburg for the honor of being named the capital of the new county. That dignity was conferred upon the latter, and forthwith Beulah declined through chagrin and disappointment. She was never able to hold up her head afterward. Colonel Swank says: "That unfortunate tilt with Ebensburg 'fixed' beyond peradventure the destiny of Beulah. Its Welsh burghers soon commenced to turn a longing look upon the county-seat; the implements of husbandry and the tools of the cunning workman were laid away to rust, and the price of real estate rapidly declined. Ere long Beulah was deserted, and it remains deserted to this day. Where once stood the bustling little village,

now only can be seen a single old-fashioned and very shaky wooden dwelling—a fitting relic and a sorry monument of the departed greatness of Beulah. All else is gone. Even the streets, the ‘busy streets’ of Beulah—where are they?”\*

The history of Beulah presents us with a new edition of Goldsmith’s “Deserted Village:”

“Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,  
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn!  
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant’s hand is seen,  
And Desolation saddens all thy green.”

Ebensburg, two miles east of Beulah, was laid out by the Rev. Morgan J. Rees, at nearly the same time with the latter. The ground upon which it is built was bought of the celebrated Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia. The original settlers of Ebensburg, as of Beulah, were exclusively Welsh. It had a powerful rival in the latter town, until, by the act of 1805, it was directed to be the seat of justice for the county, which gave it an impulse that enabled it to far distance its haughty competitor. The great northern turnpike, running from Pittsburgh to Huntingdon, passes through the central part of the town. There is also a turnpike leading from it to the town of Indiana.

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\* Editorial Brevities, p 9.

The town is pleasantly situated, almost on the summit of the Alleghany mountains. The eye can sweep in every direction over a vast expanse of woodland, field, and hill-top, to the far-off horizon, that, like a circle, hems in the scene. The air is pure and healthful, though, in the winter, it is said, it is rather too *bracing*. Surrounding the town is some good farming land.

Ebensburg contains a fine court house, and the usual county buildings, several good hotels, stores, shops, and some very fine private dwellings. The inhabitants are an intelligent, hospitable, free-hearted people, as the dwellers in mountain regions have ever been. A newspaper, called the "Cambria Gazette," was established here about the year 1816. There are now two papers published in the town, the "Democrat and Sentinel," and the "Alleghenian." The Ebensburg and Cresson Railroad, built in 1862, gave a stimulus to the business of the town, and caused considerable improvements to be made. The population is about 1000.

On Sunday evening, July 31st, 1842, one of the most atrocious murders ever committed was perpetrated in the neighborhood of this town. That evening two men broke into the

house of Mrs. Elizabeth Holder, a lone widow, who resided near Ebensburg, and who was thought by some persons to have some money in her house. At their first attack, she screamed a few times very violently, and her next neighbor, a Mr. Rainey, who had retired to bed, heard her, and ran to her assistance. But ere he got there the struggle was all over, and she was no more; and they were plundering the house. Mr. Rainey was afraid to venture into the house alone, and ran off for more assistance. Four or five men soon came along with him, and they arrived there just as the murderers were about leaving. The citizens endeavored to take them, and fired a rifle at one of them, but missed him. They made their escape, in the darkness of the night, into the neighboring woods.\* They were afterwards arrested—one at Bellefonte and the other near Meadville, and were imprisoned at Ebensburg. They proved to be two brothers, named Bernard and Patrick Flanagan, Irishmen, from Centre county, this State. On Wednesday, the 6th of October of the same year, they were arraigned before Hon. Thomas White, President Judge, and Richard Lewis and John Murray, Associate Judges, of the

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\* Mountaineer, August, 1842,

Court of Oyer and Terminer of this county. The trial continued daily, except Sunday, until the night of Saturday, the 15th. More than seventy witnesses were examined. The prosecution was conducted by Thomas C. M'Dowell, Esq., the Attorney for the Commonwealth, and Messrs. John G. Miles, George Taylor, and John Fenlon, Esqs. The defense was sustained by Messrs. Michael Dan Magehan, Joshua F. Cox, John S. Rhey, and Michael Hasson, Esqs. The evidence was closed on the evening of Thursday, the 13th, when the addresses to the jury were opened by Mr. Taylor. The greater part of Friday was occupied by Mr. Rhey and Mr. Magehan on the part of the prisoners, and Mr. McDowell on the part of the Commonwealth. On the evening of Friday Mr. Cox commenced his speech for the accused, which he finished at noon on Saturday. In the afternoon Mr. Miles summed up for the Commonwealth, and Judge White delivered the charge to the jury. The jury retired about eight o'clock the same evening, and after a short absence returned a verdict that the prisoners were guilty of murder in the first degree. Thus ended the most important and most exciting trial that has ever taken place in our county.

The Flanagans were never hung. Efforts were made to secure a new trial, and the Legislature and the Supreme Court were importuned on the subject, but a new trial was not granted. After a long delay, Governor Porter finally signed the death warrant, but on the evening before it was received in Ebensburg the Flanagans escaped from jail! They have never since been heard of by the public.\*

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\* Johnstown Tribune, July 28th, 1865.

## CHAPTER IV.

## PUBLIC THOROUGHFARES.

During the earliest periods in the history of the Conemaugh valley the only thoroughfare through it was the river itself and a narrow Indian path that led from the head-waters of the Juniata Creek to the Conemaugh near the present site of Johnstown. For some years after the first settlements were formed in the region of the Conemaugh, this path was still the only road leading from the valley across the mountains. The ancestors of many of the present inhabitants of this region came in by this Indian path.

Very early in the present century, Smith's State Road and the Frankstown Road were constructed. These followed the course of the old path. This was an important enterprise for that early day. It opened up a wider intercourse with the more populous east. By this road large quantities of pig metal were brought from "down east," some of which was manufactured into iron at a forge that had been erected in the embryo village of Johns-



town, and some was carried in flat-boats by the river to Pittsburg.

During the spring and fall freshets, the business of flat-boating was very brisk. A trip to the distant town of Pittsburg, in those days, was a matter of nearly if not quite as much moment as to New Orleans in these days of progress. The banks of the river were lined with almost unbroken forests, and the shrill cry of the wolf and the wild-cat alone awoke the echoes. No smiling villages were to be seen from the forks to the mouth of the Cone-maugh.

About the years 1819 and 1820, a turnpike was constructed through several of the counties lying in this valley. This turnpike led from Pittsburg to Huntingdon, and thence on to Philadelphia. The idea of building such a road over the mountains was deemed by the majority of the people of that day as simply preposterous! They did not believe it could be done. We may think lightly of the simplicity of such people, and yet, gentle reader, fifty years from to-day our descendants will doubtless smile complacently at the vaunted "improvements" and "progress" of their grandfathers. The world is yet only in its infancy. The enterprise, however, was pushed forward

by the energetic men who had undertaken it, until it was completed. It was a well-made road, and was famous for many years. Towns and villages sprang up along its sides. It was the great highway between the east and the west, and with such admiration was it regarded for some time after its completion, that no man's imagination dared soar so high as to picture a better means of communication.

But the spirit of progress was abroad. It had long been a subject of consideration with the people of Pennsylvania how to connect the waters of the eastern with the waters of the western part of the State, so as to form a continuous line of navigation between the two sections of the country. It had occupied the thoughts of William Penn himself. As early as 1762, Dr. David Rittenhouse and the Rev. William Smith had been employed to survey a route by which the same grand object might be reached.

To carry out successfully the gigantic project of uniting the great eastern with the great western waters, was supposed to require an amount of capital, and of credit, beyond the control of any joint stock company; and the pre-eminent power and credit of the State herself were enlisted in the enterprise. Unfortunately, to do this required legislative *votes*, and

these votes were not to be had without extending the ramifications of the system throughout all the counties whose patronage was necessary to carry the measure. In March, 1824, commissioners were appointed to explore a route for a canal from Harrisburg to Pittsburg by way of the Juniata and Conemaugh, and by way of the West Branch of the Susquehanna, Sinnemahoning, and the Allegheny—and also between the head-waters of the Schuylkill, by Mahanoy Creek, to the Susquehanna—with other projects. In 1825, canal commissioners were appointed to explore a number of routes in various directions through the State. In August, 1825, a convention of the friends of internal improvements, consisting of delegates from forty-six counties, met at Harrisburg, and passed resolutions in favor of “opening an entire and complete communication from the Susquehanna to the Allegheny and Ohio, and from the Allegheny to Lake Erie, by the nearest and best practicable route.” The starting impulse being thus given, the great enterprise moved on, increasing in strength and magnitude as each successive legislature convened; and the citizens of every section were highly excited, not to say intoxicated, with local schemes of internal improvement.\*

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\* Day's Hist. Col., page 47.

Between the years 1828 and 1833, the work upon the Pennsylvania Canal and Alleghany Portage Railroad was carried forward. The design was originally entertained of connecting the main Pittsburg route by continuing the canals with locks and dams as far as possible on both sides, and then tunnel through the mountain summit, a distance of four miles. This idea was soon abandoned. The survey for the railroad was made by Mr. Sylvester Welch, and everything duly considered, it was a creditable enterprise. An old writer, in the warmth of his admiration, says: "Mr. Welch has immortalized his name by a work equal in importance and grandeur to any in the world. He has raised a monument to the intelligence, enterprise, and public spirit of Pennsylvania, more honorable than the temples and pyramids of Egypt, or the triumphant arches and columns of Rome. They were erected to commemorate the names of tyrants, or the battles of victorious chieftains, while these magnificent works are intended to subserve the interests of agriculture, manufacture, and commerce—to encourage the arts of peace—to advance the prosperity and happiness of the whole people of the United States—to strengthen the bonds of the Union."\*

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\* Hist. Six Counties, p. 580.

The railroad lay for the greater part in Cambria county. Its western terminus was at Johnstown. Its length was thirty-six miles, terminating to the eastward at Hollidaysburg. It consisted of a series of planes and levels. There were ten planes, numbered in their order from the west towards the east. The first plane was 1,607.74 feet in length, and had an elevation of 150 feet. Plane number two was 1,760.43 feet long, and had an elevation of 132.40 feet. Plane number three was 1,480.25 feet long, and had an elevation of 130.50 feet. Plane number four, was 2,194.93 feet in length, and had an elevation of 187.86 feet. Plane number five was 2,628.50 feet long, and had an elevation of 201.64 feet. This brings us to the summit of the Alleghany mountains, after which we descend upon the other side. Plane number six was 2,713.85 feet in length, and had a depression of 266.50 feet. Plane number seven was 2,655.01 feet long, and had a depression of 260.50 feet. Plane number eight was 3,116.92 feet in length, and had a depression of 307.60 feet. Plane number nine was 2,720.80 feet long, and had a depression of 189.50 feet. Plane number ten was 2,295.61 feet in length, and had a depression of 180.52 feet.

The inclination of some of the levels was as great as that of some of the planes: for instance, that of level number two was one hundred and eighty-nine feet. This, however, was gained in a distance of over thirteen miles, so that it was merely a light grade. At the top of each of the planes were stationary engines, by means of which the ascending and descending trains of trucks and cars were raised or lowered by ropes of twisted wires to which they were attached. This kind of railroading in our days would be considered entirely too slow; yet at that day the construction of the old Portage railroad, as we have seen, was considered a grand triumph of science and skill. Sometimes, it is true, the ropes or the couplings of the cars would break, when all would run pell-mell to the bottom of the plane to the destruction of life and property; and so, too, in modern days, trains sometimes run off the track or into each other to the same effect.

At the top of plane number one, a tunnel perforated the hill, a distance of eight hundred and seventy feet. It is also twenty feet in height. The tunnel is still remaining, as it will likely remain for ages to come. It is now not used for any purpose whatever. A few miles



beyond the tunnel a beautiful viaduct, a single arch of eighty feet span, crossed the river at the Horseshoe Bend. The track of the Pennsylvania Railroad now lies upon it. The river here makes a singular curve. It runs a distance of three miles around a point of land, which, at this place, is scarcely more than three hundred feet across! The cost of the railroad, including the stationary engines, and so forth, exceeded \$1,500,000.

The Western Division of the Pennsylvania canal, extending from Johnstown to Pittsburg, was rapidly pushed to its completion. This division was nearly one hundred and five miles in length, and had a descent by lockage of four hundred and seventy feet. On it are nine dams, seventy locks, and fifteen aqueducts.\* Nine miles below Blairsville, the canal passes through a tunnel eight hundred and seventeen feet long.† At the western end of the tunnel, the canal crosses the Conemaugh upon a magnificent stone aqueduct. The view of this aqueduct and the tunnel perforating the rugged hill-side, is quite pleasing to the traveler passing up the canal. Another tunnel of

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\* See Canal Com. Report for 1851, p. 15.

† Hist. Six Counties, p. 602. In Day's Hist. Col., page 375, this tunnel is said to be over 1,000 feet long. This, we conceive to be an error.



about the same length, pierces this hill but a few rods above the old one. This has been made for the North-Western railroad. The cost of making this canal was \$2,964,882.

The scenery along this portion of the public works, winding as it does along the Cone-maugh, is varied and beautiful. It passes through deep gorges, where dense primeval forests look down and see themselves in the waters below; through broad cultivated fields, where the flash of the sickle and the merry songs of the gleaners are seen and heard; by cosy farm-houses, around which at the closing in of day the lowing of herds, the tinkling of sheep-bells, and the gabbling and quacking of geese and ducks make domestic music; along by thriving towns and quiet, shady villages, where peace, prosperity, and contentment have their cherished abode. The Pennsylvania Railroad, the Western Pennsylvania Railroad, formerly called the North-Western Railroad, and the Allegheny Valley Railroad, have now supplanted this portion of the old main line, and opened up vast resources unthought of before.

The work of making the canal from Pittsburg to Johnstown was completed, or nearly so at least, as early as 1831 or 1832. The rail-

road was not finished for some time afterward. That portion of the canal between Blairsville and Johnstown was but little used until after the completion of the railroad; but the section leading to Pittsburg from Blairsville was kept in constant and successful operation. The principal part of the merchandise brought from the west was landed at Blairsville from the canal boats and conveyed in wagons to Hollidaysburg, where it was again placed in boats and taken on to Philadelphia. That from the east was brought over from Hollidaysburg to Blairsville in the same manner, and thence passed down the canal in boats. Packet boats started daily from Blairsville and Pittsburg, the passage consuming about thirty hours.\*

The Portage railroad was completed, or at least so far completed, as to permit trains to pass over its entire length, in the fall of 1833. An old newspaper records the first trip of this kind as follows:

“On 'Tuesday last, two Cars, one of them a new one built at Pittsburg, and intended for a lumber Car, left the basin at Conemaugh,† and arrived at the summit. They had on board Messrs. White, Waln, Hoopes, and Atwood,

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\* See a Letter in the Philadelphia Gazette, June, 1833.

† That is, Johnstown

four of the Philadelphia Delegates to the late Warren convention, the Superintendent, Engineers and a number of the Contractors and Citizens. They arrived at the Summit in the afternoon and were greeted by the cheers of a number of the citizens of Hollidaysburg, who had arrived in Cars from that place, and a number of the citizens of this county, who had convened to view the interesting spectacle. After partaking of a sumptuous dinner, prepared by Mr. Denlinger, in his large and commodious house at the intersection of the Turnpike and Railroad, the Passengers proceeded in the Cars to Hollidaysburg, where, we are happy to hear, they arrived safely."\* The completion of the road was a great event at that time, and on the tenth day of December, 1833, a meeting was held at the house of Mr. Denlinger, "for the purpose of making preparatory arrangements for suitably celebrating the completion of the Alleghany Portage Rail Road."† Of this meeting C. Garber, Esq., was chairman, and J. C. Graham, secretary. Of the celebration itself, we have no report.

Upon the opening of navigation in the spring of 1834, the railroad was in complete working

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\* Ebensburg Sky, Nov. 28, 1833.

† Ibid, December 19th, 1833.

order, and business upon it and the canal opened briskly. In May, of that year, C. F. Dixon, of Johnstown, gives notice that he has placed a "commodious passenger car" on the railroad, to start every other day from Johnstown and Hollidaysburg, and assures the public that the trip can be made in *eight hours*, and that "every attention will be paid to the comfort and convenience of passengers." He further says, "There will be another car placed on the road early next week. The cars will then start every day from both towns at 7 o'clock A. M."\* That business upon the line was flourishing for a new enterprise may be seen in the fact that the amount of tolls received at Hollidaysburg and Johnstown for the week ending May 24th, 1834, was respectively \$1503.53, and \$1851.65.†

The next achievement of that progressive age was one of so striking a character that it is strange it did not excite more curiosity and inquiry. In an old newspaper we find the following account: "The Western Division of the Pennsylvania canal has been navigated by *steam*! Last week a steam canal boat (the *Adeline*) came up from Pittsburg, and went on to Johnstown. She returned on Sunday morn-

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\* Ebensburg Sky, May 15, 1834.

† Pennsylvania Reporter, May 30, 1834.

ing with a load of near 40,000 lbs. of blooms, passing this place very handsomely, at the rate of rather more than three miles an hour; and making less wave in the water than a boat drawn by horses. She is propelled by means of a fixture of peculiar construction, which works in a recess of the stern entirely under water. The enterprise of the proprietors is worthy of commendation, as well as the hope that it may prove profitable to them."\* Except this, there seems never to have been a thought indulged of navigating the canal by steam.

The first trip made by a boat over the mountains is said to have been made in October, 1834. Jesse Chrisman, from the Lackawanna, loaded his boat, named the "Hit or Miss," with his family, furniture, live-stock, and all, and started for Illinois. At Hollidaysburg, where he intended to sell his boat, it was suggested by John Daugherty, of the Reliance Transportation line, that the whole concern could be safely hoisted over the mountain, and set afloat again in the canal. A car calculated to bear the novel burden was prepared, the boat was taken out of the water and placed upon it, and at noon of the same day it was

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\* Blairsville Record, June 11, 1834

started on its way over the rugged Alleghanies. All this was done without disturbing the occupants of the boat. They rested at night on the top of the mountain, like Noah's ark on Ararat, and the next morning they descended into the valley of the Mississippi and sailed for St. Louis.\*

The construction of the old main line was certainly a magnificent achievement. It opened up a highway between the east and the west, and brought the *cis-* and *trans*-Alleghanians into closer communion. It was a highway proportioned to the progress and wants of the people. It perhaps did more for the development of the western country than any other agency whatever. The amount of business transacted upon it for those times was immense. For instance, during the year ending November 30th, 1851, which may be considered a medium year—neither so good as the best nor so poor as the worst, the receipts at Johnstown alone, amounted to \$140,177,15.†

The canal was supplied by the waters of the Conemaugh and Stony Creek. To accomplish this, dams were thrown across these streams; that across the Conemaugh just at the upper end of Johnstown, and that across

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\* History of the Six Counties, p. 580.

† See Canal Commissioners' Report, 1851.



the Stony Creek one mile and a half above that town. To convey the water from the latter to the canal, a trench was dug along the right bank of the stream, and thence across the upper end of the town to the canal basin. This trench is still known as the "feeder." The water from the dam on the Conemaugh could be turned at once into the basin through gates constructed for that purpose.

Yet business on the canal suffered more or less every year from the want of water. To remedy this defect it was resolved at length to build a reservoir on one of the mountain branches of the Conemaugh, that would hold a vast quantity of water in reserve against time of need. A suitable location was found on the South Fork, about ten miles from Johnstown. A reservoir similar to that contemplated had been made on the Juniata division of the main line, and had established the fact that navigation could be maintained by this means in the dryest of seasons.

The Legislature, in 1836, made an appropriation of thirty thousand dollars towards this object.\* It was not commenced, however, until the year 1838. The original appropriation was found to be insufficient, and other

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\* Act of February 18th, 1836.



sums were subsequently voted. The reservoir covered an area of six hundred acres, and was calculated to contain four hundred and eighty millions cubic feet of available water. This would be sufficient to fill a canal five hundred and sixty miles long, thirty feet wide, and five feet deep. If filled into hogshead thirty inches in diameter, and standing side by side, they would form a row that would more than encompass the earth; or, if diffused in the form of rain, it would be sufficient to water all of Pennsylvania west of the Alleghanies! The work was completed in 1853, at a cost of several hundred thousand dollars. It was found to answer the purpose for which it had been constructed. In the summer of 1862, the dam or embankment of the reservoir gave way, precipitating a flood upon the valley. Fortunately, however, it contained but a comparatively small quantity of water at the time, the escape of which had been going on for some days previous to the general *crevasse*, so that but little damage resulted.

In the year 1846, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company was incorporated. The object of the company was to open a new and improved thoroughfare between the two chief cities of Pennsylvania—Philadelphia and Pittsburg,

and thus supply an important link in the chain of intercommunication between the east and the west. The Portage had served its purpose nobly, well; but the progressive spirit of the age had voted it a *bore*, and sought a more rapid and convenient transit of the Alleghenies than by the old-fashioned planes and stationary engines.

Much labor, expense, and ingenuity were employed in finding a route by which this object might be accomplished. At length success crowned their efforts. The survey wound up the eastern slope of the mountains in a very circuitous manner, and crossed the summit at a point but a short distance from the Portage Railroad. It here passes through a tunnel three thousand seven hundred feet in length, at an elevation of three thousand feet above the sea. This tunnel, perhaps one of the greatest pieces of work in the United States, was completed in 1853. Descending the western slope of the mountains by the valley of the Conemaugh to Johnstown, the railroad continues to follow that river as far down as the Blairsville Intersection, where they diverge. This improvement was completed in 1853, and is now one of the safest, best finished, best furnished, and best managed railroads in the

Union. It has annihilated time and space. The passenger may eat his supper in Pittsburg, sleep securely and comfortably through the night, and wake up in time for his breakfast in Philadelphia the next morning. People don't live so long as Methuselah now-a-days; and they don't need to. It took Methuselah all his time, we dare say, to get through the world by the "slow coaches" of that period.

The construction of this young rival at his side infused new life into the almost inanimate body of the old Portage. His was the inspiration of the old plow-horse that kicks up his heels with a few extra flourishes as the two-year old colt capers about him. During the legislative session of 1850, an act was passed authorizing a survey to be made for a new road that would avoid the inclined planes. This was no easy matter. "It required great skill, energy, and patience, to find two routes over these mountains without inclined planes. But after an immense amount of labor, and with many windings, both objects were accomplished. These roads cross each other a number of times, some places at the same elevation, and other places at an elevation differing as much as thirty feet."\*

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\* S. B. McCormick, Esq.

The work on the new road was begun in 1851, and pushed forward to its completion in 1855. It crossed the mountain through a tunnel some three thousand feet in length about half a mile south of the tunnel on the Pennsylvania Railroad. The cost of this new work was over one million dollars. By doing away with the stationary engines, a vast number of supernumerary employees, and so forth, it was calculated to reduce the annual expense to the Commonwealth nearly one hundred thousand dollars. It was at the same time put on something like a footing of competition with its upstart rival. It was somewhat longer than the Pennsylvania Railroad, but had the advantage of a lighter grade in ascending the mountain.\*

By an act of the legislature of 1852, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company was authorized to extend the Blairsville Branch railroad to the town of Indiana, in Indiana county. This railroad is about nineteen miles in length, counting from its junction with the main road, or about sixteen, reckoning from Blairsville.

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\* The propriety of constructing a new road over the mountains was speculated upon at a very early period. In the session of 1836, the sum of two thousand dollars was appropriated by a resolution of the legislature to survey a route across the Alleghanies with a view to avoid the inclined planes on the Portage railroad.—See Pamphlet Laws, page 851.

It was completed in 1855. Its direction is nearly due north. It lies through a fertile and well cultivated region of country, where the advantages arising from its construction have been mutual. Perhaps no portion of railroad of equal length along the entire line has "paid better" than the Indiana Branch. Two trains run daily to and from Indiana, connecting with trains on the main road.

In 1853, the North Western Railroad company was incorporated by act of Legislature. This road has one of its termini at Blairsville; the other was designed to be at Newcastle. At present (1865) it has been completed as far as Freeport. It is in running order to that point, and trains are making daily trips to and fro. This road was begun in 1854, and some considerable progress was made. But difficulties of some kind arose, and work upon the improvement was suspended. It so remained for a number of years, when, in 1863, it passed into the hands of the Pennsylvania Railroad company. With their accustomed energy and promptness the work was recommenced, and since then has been pushed towards its completion. Its direction is westerly, and it crosses the Conemaugh a number of times in its course. It lies through a rich, productive

region, which it is calculated to develop to a surprising degree.

In the year 1859, a company was incorporated to construct a railroad from Cresson, on the Pennsylvania Railroad, to Ebensburg, the county seat of Cambria county. In 1861, it was leased, yet unfinished, by the Pennsylvania Railroad company for the short term of nine hundred and ninety-nine years! This ought to bring us round to about the time predicted when Miller's saints shall "blow up the globe." In the hands of the Pennsylvania Railroad company the Ebensburg branch was speedily completed. Trains began running upon it in 1862. It passes through one of the most fertile districts of the "Mountain County," which it is greatly benefiting.

For many years prior to 1857, the question of selling the Main Line of Public Works of Pennsylvania had been mooted, both in the legislature and out of it. But as time passed on the question attracted more and more attention. Public sentiment was nearly evenly balanced on the subject, and strong parties ranged themselves on each side. Forthwith a war of words ensued.

Those who favored the sale of the line insisted that it was a fountain-head of corruption.



and fraud, and was used as an electioneering machine by whatever political party happened to hold the reins of power. It was charged that the management of the public improvements had been proverbially bad, and instead of being a source of revenue to the Commonwealth, they had only been a source of overwhelming expense. The acts of successive legislatures show that there were some grounds of reason for this charge. Leeches and vampires in large numbers were said to have fastened upon its enfeebled corpus, where they clung with all their native tenacity. It absorbed yearly appropriations of hundreds of thousands of dollars as easily and gratuitously as a sponge absorbs water. Indeed, the old main line was everywhere known as the "old State Robber." Hosts of supernumeraries were employed for no other reason apparently than because they had served the "party," and were entitled to a "feed" out of the public manger. Even the ass knoweth his master's crib.

The other party, while admitting the mismanagement that had brought the public works into such disrepute, denied that this was owing to any defect in the system. They believed that by a proper administration of the



affairs of the line it would prove to be a source of profit to the Commonwealth. Vast sums of money had been expended in constructing it in the first place, and in making it keep pace with the march of improvement afterward, and it was now in a better condition to answer the expectations and wants of the public than ever. They contended against the policy of surrendering into the hands of a powerful corporation the only hope of competition—thus giving to that corporation an exclusive monopoly of a large and important branch of industry. Such was the material out of which the two parties fashioned their “thunder.”

During the session of 1857, however, a bill was passed by the legislature authorizing the sale of the main line. The same year it was purchased by the Pennsylvania Railroad company, as everybody foresaw it would be. The sum paid was \$7,500,000.

Some parts of the line were kept in running order for short periods of time after their sale; but now all that part lying in the Conemaugh valley has been destroyed and abandoned. Whatever advantage the sale of this line may have been to the State at large, it must be conceded that it was a direful stroke to the prosperity of this region. What were

flourishing towns and villages before, are now dilapidated and almost depopulated. Grass and thistles are now growing up in their streets, and they soon will have gone the way of Beulah and Newport. The bats now inhabit the palaces of the Cæsars. Even those places which were not entirely blighted, were made to suffer. Business fell off, and real estate everywhere along the line depreciated in value.

## CHAPTER V.

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### JOHNSTOWN AND ITS SUBURBS.

Johnstown is the metropolis of the Conemaugh valley. It is situated on the point of land between the Conemaugh and Stony Creek, at their junction. Its location is very similar to that of Pittsburg. The ground upon which the chief part of the town is built is nearly a dead level; there being scarcely fall enough in any direction to answer the purposes of proper drainage. In military parlance, Johnstown is "commanded" by high hills. It lies in the narrow basin between the Alleghanies and the Laurel Hill. Lofty heights girt it round about on every side. There is no good farming lands in the immediate vicinity of Johnstown; but the surrounding hills are "full" of valuable minerals, to which the town owes its importance.

Conrad Weiser, Interpreter of the Province of Pennsylvania, seems to have been the first white man that ever set foot upon the site of Johnstown. It is true that ere his time white captives may have passed over this spot on

their melancholy way to the western wilds; but if so, we have no account of them. In 1748, Weiser was despatched with a large present to the Indians on the Ohio, to confirm them in their allegiance to the British cause. George Croghan, a celebrated frontiersman of that period, was sent along to conduct the expedition through the Indian country.

On the eleventh day of August, 1748, the little party of Weiser left Berks county on their important mission. After traveling nearly two hundred miles, August 22d, they "crossed the Allegheny hills, and came to the Clear Fields." The day following they "came to the Showonese Cabbins," a distance of thirty-four miles. Here they met about twenty of the horses sent by Croghan to convey the goods from Frankstown. By the "Showonese Cabbins," we believe is indicated the present site of Johnstown; as it is well known that a Shawanese town once stood here. The distance from one point to another, as he names them, considering the route they probably pursued, which it is likely was not far from a straight line, would just about bring them to this place. On the 25th, they crossed what he calls the "Kiskeminetoes Creek," by which he means the lower Conemaugh, and came to the Allegheny river, then called the Ohio, at

the distance of fifty-eight miles from the "Showonese Cabbins."

Ten years later, in November, 1758, Christian Frederick Post, on a message from the government to the Indians on the Ohio, also passed through this place. Post came over from Raystown, now Bedford. While coming through Somerset county, he found to his dismay, near Stony Creek, as he says, "one of the worst roads that ever was traveled."—Some people believe that the road supervisors haven't been along that route since. On the 11th of November he came to an old Shawanese town, called Kickenapawling. This village is said to have occupied the spot upon which Johnstown now stands, and was, then, identical with the "Showonese Cabbins" of Weiser. At the period of Post's visit it seems to have been long abandoned, for he speaks of it distinctly as the *old* Shawanese town, and further says, that it was so grown up with "weeds, briars and bushes," that they could scarcely get through. The following lines from Campbell are perhaps descriptive of the village as it appeared to Post:

"All ruined and wild is their roofless abode,  
And lonely the dark raven's sheltering tree;  
And traveled by few is the grass covered road,  
Where the hunter of deer and the warrior trode  
To his hills that encircle the sea."

Post spells the name Heckkeknepalin. This is undoubtedly a *lapsus pennaë*, or a mis-print. We think the correct name is Keckkeknepalin. By what authority it has been changed to Kickenapawling, we are at a loss to tell. Probably the name Keckkeknepalin was given to the village some time subsequent to the visit of Weiser, in honor of a chief of that name who probably afterward lived here.— This chief was a conspicuous person during the French and Indian troubles of 1750—1760. He was the leader of a gang of Indians that made an onslaught on the settlers near Penn's Creek, on the sixteenth of October, 1755, killing fifteen, and taking prisoners ten more, whom they carried to Kittanning. We also find his name among the "Captains and Councillors" who delivered a speech to Post, at Cuscusking, September 3, 1758. His partners in this were King Beaver, Delaware George, Kill Buck, and others. Post also mentions a visit which he received from him at Old French Town, at the mouth of Beaver Creek, on the seventeenth of November of the same year. These facts lead us to the opinion that Keckkeknepalin and his people had migrated to that section some time before.

On leaving Kickenapawling, Post and his



companions ascended a very steep hill, perhaps what is now called "Benshoof's Hill," and the horse of Thomas Hickman "tumbled and rolled down the hill like a wheel," whereupon Thomas grew angry, and declared he would go no farther with them; but not being able to find another road, and perhaps not liking the hospitalities of Kickenapawling, he very wisely reconsidered his resolution, and rejoined the party shortly afterward, feeling, as the ingenuous Post says, "a little ashamed." He adds, however, that they were "glad to see him." This unfortunate fellow would seem to have been born to bad luck. [Post relates another little mishap that befell him on the 9th of September, 1758: "We took a little foot-Path," says he, "hardly to be seen, we lost it and went through thick Bushes till we came to a mire, which we did not see till we were in it, and Tom Hickman fell in and almost broke his leg."

In 1791 or 1792, Joseph Johns, an enterprising German, who had not the fear of the red men before his eyes, strayed over to the ancient village of Kickenapawling. He seems to have liked the locality better than the former inhabitants did who had abandoned it so many years before, for he determined to settle



here. He did more than this; he determined to found a city on the ruins of Kickenapawling. Perhaps visions of its future greatness and prosperity filled up the vacuity of many a lonely hour!

As this was the head of navigation to those seeking the western waters, Mr. Johns was not long the only settler in this wild region. Other hardy spirits soon joined him here. The whole territory hereabouts was then known as the "Conemaugh country." By 1800, the number of settlers here was so numerous that Mr. Johns proceeded to carry out what we fancy was his darling project: to establish a town; for, November third, of that year, he filed a charter in Somerset describing and legalizing the town of "Conemaugh," as he chose to christen it. The venerable Abraham Morrison, Esq.,\* of Johnstown, then a practicing attorney in the town of Somerset, was a witness to this document.

From this charter we find that the town was then comprised in "one hundred and forty-one lots, ten streets, six alleys, and one Market Square." Johns conveyed to the use of the public, "one acre for a Burying ground," "the square on Main street containing the

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\*Died February, 1865.

Lots No. Forty-nine, Fifty, Fifty-one, & Fifty-two for a County Court House and other public buildings," and declares that "all that piece of ground called the point, laying between the said town and the Junction of the two rivers or creeks aforesaid, shall be reserved for commons and public amusements for the use of the said Town and its future inhabitants for ever." Among the earliest settlers in the town of Conemaugh were Peter Goughenour, Joseph Francis, and Ludwig Wissinger. The descendants of Goughenour and Wissinger still live in the neighborhood.

The following incident we find in A. J. Hite's little volume entitled "The Hand-Book of Johnstown." It describes the final exit of the last of the Shawanese that figure in the history of Kickenapawling:

"Long after the white man had opened his lodge on the 'flat,' a solitary Indian remained, who spent his time in hunting, and fishing along the rivers contiguous. He is described as having been a venerable looking man, and of a peaceful disposition, neither interfering with the affairs of the whites nor encroaching on their property, but who quietly set his traps for beaver or sat by the stream at his favorite fishing-grounds, deeply wrapt in thought.

One day, while paddling peaceably in his canoe, near town, a rifle, in the hands of a renegade white man, was fired from a neighboring thicket, and the old man fell dead into the stream.

“The scene of this tragic occurrence was on the Conemaugh, opposite where the Red Mill now stands, fronting Hingston’s Gap.”

Though Johns had conferred the name of “Conemaugh” on the new village, it gradually changed to Johnstown. The infant settlement slowly but steadily increased in size and importance. A road was cut through the wilderness to Frankstown, on the eastern side of the mountains. This road was the great trans-Alleghany route for many years.

The early history of Conemaugh was marked with but few incidents which have been thought worthy of preservation. It is recorded that in 1808, and again in 1816, the village was overflowed with water, and the inhabitants were obliged to fly to the hills for safety. About the year 1812, the first grist-mill was erected. A small forge was also put up about the same time. The manufacture of iron was thus an early pursuit in Johnstown. The transportation of this article was long performed by means of pack-horses and mules.

At a little later period this business was carried on in rafts and flat-boats. These craft made the trip from Conemaugh to Pittsburg, then a thriving young city, whenever the stage of water was favorable. In 1816, the first keel-boat was built by Isaac Proctor, one of the earliest merchants in the village. It was built on the bank of the Stony Creek, near the site of the Union Graveyard. One or two other iron forges were subsequently erected. One of these is known to have stood on the bank of the Stony Creek, a little below the place where Bedford street comes out upon the creek, and another on the Conemaugh, near the spot where McConaughy's steam tannery now stands. Mr. Hite says, that while digging the race for this last forge, old fire-brands, pieces of blankets, an earthen smoke-pipe, and other Indian relics were discovered twelve feet below the surface of the earth.

Broken occasionally by such slight ripples as these, the stream of time in ancient Conemaugh glided calmly along until the year 1828. In that year the long debated public improvements were commenced. We have treated of this matter at length in another chapter. Johnstown, for by this name the village was universally known, fortunately for

herself lay just where it was necessary to make the connecting point between the canal and the railroad. This fact gave to Johnstown some importance. A large canal-basin was dug, and depots, machine-shops, warehouses, and all the other paraphernalia belonging to the termini of the railroad and canal were erected. In the course of a few years the line was completed, and the arrival and departure of the boats and railroad trains imparted a degree of life and activity to the town.

In the year 1831, the town was incorporated by the name of Conemaugh. It then had a population of about seven hundred souls. By 1840, it had increased to 912; 1850; to 1269; 1860, to 4185, and at this time, 1865, it cannot be far from 6000. In 1846, a furnace was erected on the bluff just across the canal from where the railroad station now stands. It furthered materially the prosperity of the town. In 1864, it was completely torn down, having lain idle for some years immediately preceding. About 1830, the first foundry in Johnstown was built by Sylvester Welsh, the chief engineer of the Portage Railroad. It stood upon the ground now occupied by the store of Wood, Morrell & Co. In 1831 or

1832, a new firm became proprietors of the concern, and a new foundry was built on what is known as the "Island," the new enterprise supplanting its predecessor. This foundry passed through different hands, until, in 1864, it came into the possession of the Johnstown Mechanical Works Company. At about 12 o'clock on Tuesday night, June 5th, 1865, the foundry was discovered to be on fire, and in a few hours this venerable enterprise lay in ashes and smouldering ruins on the ground. In 1852, S. H. Smith, Esq., then owner of the foundry, connected with it a large establishment for the making of cars and machinery. By an act of the legislature, approved April 14th, 1834, the name of the town was changed from Conemaugh to Johnstown. In 1861, an act was passed extending the limits of the borough so as to include that suburb known as "Goose Island." By the same act, we believe, the town was divided into five wards. The fifth ward comprises Kernville, and lies on the southern side of the Stony Creek. A neat, substantial bridge connects the two sections of the town.

The first newspaper published in Johnstown, we believe, was the "Johnstown Democrat," which was started about the year 1834.



In 1836, the "Ebensburg Sky," which had been published by the late Hon. Moses Canan,\* was removed to Johnstown, where it was published by his son, John J. Canan, Esq. These early papers have had numerous successors—the "Cambria Gazette," the "Johnstown News," the "Cambrian," the "Transcript," the "Allegheny Mountain Echo," the "Cambria Tribune," &c. The papers now published here are the "Johnstown Tribune," by J. M. Swank, Esq., and the "Johnstown Democrat," by H. D. Woodruff & Son. The last named is a new paper started in 1863.

The real progress of Johnstown dates from the year 1853. In that year the Cambria Iron Works were built. This mammoth enterprise at once attracted to the town a large amount of business, and a vast increase of population, as may be seen above. Scores of new houses were immediately put up. Besides the increased importance of Johnstown proper, offshoots from the town sprang up like the creations of Aladdin's lamp. These offshoots now compose the boroughs of Millville, Cambria, and Prospect. Conemaugh Borough also swelled its attenuated outline to more respectable proportions.

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\* See sketch of his life, Chap. X.



Johnstown proper contains, as we have said, about 6000 souls. It is divided into five wards. It contains a large number of stores, shops, offices, and manufacturing establishments of different kinds. There are several creditable hotels, and a large number of elegant private residences. Religion and education are fostered, and churches and schools are numerous. Of the churches the Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist Episcopal, and Roman Catholic are very fine edifices. The people of Johnstown and vicinity, indeed, of the whole valley, are industrious, enterprising, and patriotic. During the late terrible war no section of our country supported the government with more zeal and unanimity than did the people of the Conemaugh valley.

#### SUBURBS OF JOHNSTOWN.

*Conemaugh Borough.*—This is a comparatively old borough. It was incorporated March 23d, 1849. It was formerly the great business centre of this neighborhood. It contained, in the palmy days of the old main line, many large warehouses, which have now entirely disappeared, or are in the last stages of dilapidation, the State depot, and so forth, all of which have

long since gone round the Horn. It contains at present a population of about 2500. In it are two or three hotels, several stores and drinking saloons, a brewery, the "Johnstown Mechanical Works," four school houses and two churches. The business of shoo making is carried on to some extent in this town. Conemaugh Borough is divided into two wards. The sidewalks are generally covered with planks, but the streets themselves in wet weather are in a deplorable condition. The glory of the town departed with the abandonment of the old public improvements, and but little business is now carried on in it. The people generally depend upon the rolling mill for employment.

*Prospect Borough.*—This is a small village lying upon the high hill overlooking Johnstown on the north. It was incorporated in 1863. The population is about two hundred and twenty-five, principally miners.

*Millville.*—This borough lies on the western side of Johnstown, and is separated from it by the Conemaugh river. A fine bridge built in 1861, and the old aqueduct, connect the two towns. Millville was incorporated in 1858. It contains about 2300 inhabitants. In this town are the most important improvements in

the Conemaugh valley. In it are the Cambria Iron Company's rolling mill, foundry, machine, pattern, blacksmith, carpenter, wagon maker, cabinetmaker, and harness maker shops, a flouring mill, offices, and four large blast furnaces. The greater part of this town was built and is owned by this company. It is peopled almost exclusively by the employees of the rolling mill. In it are a hotel, several stores, a large steam tannery, the railroad station, and four school houses. The lower part of the town is called Minersville. A substantial bridge, upon which is a roadway for wagons and pedestrians, a railroad track for a locomotive, and another track for the company's coal trains, spans the river, and connects this town with Cambria Borough, that lies just on the opposite side. At the upper end of the town a handsome iron bridge is thrown across the river, upon which the Pennsylvania Railroad runs.

*Cambria Borough.*—This town lies west of Johnstown, and on the southern bank of the Conemaugh. It was laid out about 1853, and was incorporated in 1862. It is usually called Cambria city. It has a population of about 800. It is principally made up of employees of the Cambria Iron Works. In it are two or three stores, three or four hotels and boarding

houess, a fine brick church edifice belonging to the German Catholic congregation, and a large school house. Cambria Borough is beautifully situated on a broad, flat tract of land that stretches away for a mile or more beyond the present borough limits, which will allow the town to expand with the demands of the times. At the upper extremity of the town, and just outside of the borough, are the extensive cement works of A. J. Haws, Esq.

*Conemaugh Station*, or, as it is sometimes called, *Sylvania*, is on the Pennsylvania Railroad, about one mile east of Conemaugh Borough. It is an important fuel and water station for the locomotives used on the road. Here is a large "round-house," which will accommodate sixteen locomotives, a blacksmith and machine shop, a water station, a large coal scaffold some twenty-five feet high, to which the trucks loaded with coal ascend by means of an inclined plane, a telegraph office, and a boarding house, all the property of the railroad company. There are also three or four stores, two or three hotels, a church, and two school houses. The Conemaugh river runs through the village, dividing it into nearly equal parts. The river is spanned by a railroad bridge, and another bridge for the convenience of foot

passengers. Large quantities of shooK are made here. At this place is a blast furnace but recently erected. It was built by E. F. Hodges & Co., of New York. It has a capacity of about 100 tons per week. The furnace is well located, and has every facility for making good metal. It stands but a few rods distant from the railroad, with which it is connected by a branch. The population of Conemaugh Station is about 500. The town is not incorporated. It is a very pleasant village to live in.

*Woodvale.*—This town, which was laid out in 1864, lies in the beautiful flat extending between Johnstown and Conemaugh Station, and forms an articulating link between the two places. A substantial bridge is thrown across the river, and connects the upper end of Conemaugh Borough with the lower end of the new town. Woodvale was laid out by the Johnstown Manufacturing Company, the proprietors of the site. It embraces an area of nearly one hundred acres of the best land in the neighborhood of Johnstown; being a rich alluvial soil, with a descent of about twenty feet in the mile. This will afford sufficient drainage to keep the town dry and healthful. The Conemaugh flows along one side of the

town, and the Pennsylvania Railroad passes along the other. The principal street, which is nearly a mile long, extends the length of the town, and runs east and west parallel with the railroad. This street is sixty feet in breadth, and has been graded and neatly and substantially paved with stone. Along the river bank a stone wall six feet high and about a mile in length has been built to prevent the washing away of the shore. A street railroad will be made, running from Woodvale to Johnstown. This will bring this new town into such close connection with the business part of the older town, that, what with the beauty of the location, and the exemption from the dust and annoyances of Johnstown and the rolling mill, which the citizens of Woodvale will enjoy, it will cause the latter to be the most attractive spot for houses in all this neighborhood. The Company's new woolen mill is located here, and a beautiful town is springing up around it as if by enchantment. There is no doubt that in a very few years Woodvale will be the most flourishing and pleasing suburb of Johnstown.



## CHAPTER VI.

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### BLAIRSVILLE.

This town is situated on the northern turnpike leading from Huntingdon to Pittsburg, at the distance of forty-two miles to the east of that city. It is built upon elevated ground on the right bank of the Conemaugh river, about thirty miles below Johnstown. A rough perpendicular precipice rises from the water's edge, which is now chiefly hidden by large warehouses and other buildings, somewhat similar in point of architecture to those of the Cowgate in Edinburg, which, Judge Brackenridge says, are thirteen stories on one side and half a story on the other. The location of Blairsville is extremely healthy; the water very good, and the place has never been visited to any extent by those dreadful disorders that sometimes carry off whole populations at one fell stroke.

This town is laid out with great regularity. The streets are broad, well paved, and as straight as a rule can make them. There are three principal streets, which run nearly due east

and west, and five cross streets. There are also four alleys running parallel with the principal streets, which divide the different squares into equal parts. The sloping character of the ground upon which the town is situated affords excellent drainage, and the streets and alleys are thus easily kept clear of filth, which no doubt adds greatly to the healthfulness of the place.

Adjoining Blairsville on the east is the village of Brownstown. It contains a population of perhaps two hundred and fifty souls. It is not incorporated, but forms a part of Burrell township. It is to all intents and purposes a suburb of Blairsville, and ought to be included in that borough. The village was probably laid out by, and named in honor of, Mr. Andrew Brown, who lived in this neighborhood as early as 1818, and was one of the charterers of Blairsville.

In Brownstown are a public school house, two large hotels, a fine Catholic church edifice, school house and parsonage, a foundry, and a threshing-machine manufactory. The turnpike passes through this town. The hill upon the slope of which the village is built contains several fine veins of coal which have long been opened, and supply the townspeople with that mineral for their own use, as well as large

quantities for export. The coal of this region is of excellent quality. The surrounding country is an alternation of hill and dale, and grove and meadow, divided into farms, most of which are highly productive.

The bank of the river about half a mile above Blairsville is very high and precipitous, and is known as the "Alum Bank." There is an upright wall of nature's own masonry, in some places fifty or sixty feet high, and below this an abrupt descent of perhaps a hundred feet more to the water's edge, covered with forests. This cliff is a mile or two in length. Several veins of iron ore and coal have been opened upon its face. The spectator who stands upon the edge of this precipice may see the tops of tall trees just at his feet and almost within his grasp. Below these is the river, beyond which may be seen the canal, the railroad, broad fields and patches of woodland stretching away to the foot of the Chestnut Ridge.

There is a number of fine buildings in Blairsville. The hotels are excellent; the churches large and tastefully finished, and the school house, containing four rooms and two halls, is spacious and commodious. There is a fine market house of brick, built in 1857, containing on the first floor an entry, a lock-up,

and a large apartment devoted to the purposes of a market; and, on the second floor, an entry, a council chamber, and a spacious room provided with seats and a rostrum, which is used for a town-hall. On the northern side of the town, surrounded by ornamental trees and shrubbery, is the Female Seminary, a large brick building of imposing appearance. It was opened for pupils in 1853. It has always maintained a high character as an institution of learning. This town was laid out about the year 1819, and was named in honor of John Blair, Esq., of Blair's Gap. The town-site originally belonged to Mr. James Campbell. The turnpike which passes through it was constructed in 1819, and gave an impetus to the growth of the town. In 1821, the noble bridge which spans the river at that place was erected. Though it has been standing for more than forty years it gives promise of lasting for years to come. It is a single arch, three hundred feet in length. For many years after its erection it was considered the best bridge in Western Pennsylvania, and was the especial pride of the good people of Blairsville. Prior to the building of this bridge, Mr. John Mulhollan ran a ferry-boat across the river where the bridge now stands.

In 1825, the town was incorporated as a borough ; and two years afterward the population was ascertained to be 500. In 1828, the Western Division of the canal was completed to this place, and the Eastern was advancing, step by step, towards the mountains ; the intermediate sections of canal and the railroad over the mountains, were in progress, but still unfinished. The carrying trade, therefore, and the increasing travel, were obliged to resort to the turnpike. This gave great importance to Blairsville as a depot, and the place was full of bustle and prosperity. Long strings of wagons laden with goods of various descriptions were every day arriving and departing. At night, the whole town was one vast caravansary for the accommodation of man and beast. There are old citizens of Blairsville who still speak in glowing terms of those golden days. Immense hotels and warehouses were erected ; four or five churches were built within three years ; property increased in value, and the hotels were swarming with speculators, engineers, contractors, and forwarding agents. Men grew rich there in a day. In 1834, the communication was opened over the mountains ; the use of the turnpike was to a great extent abandoned, and the merchants and inn keepers of Blairs-

ville were compelled to sit and see the trade and travel "pass by on the other side." A reaction and depression of course ensued to some extent; but the enterprising citizens were only driven to the natural resources of the country as a basis of trade.\*

The town, notwithstanding this back-set, continued to thrive at a more healthy rate, and in 1840 it had a population of 1000. So, too, through the next decade, and in 1850 the population had run up to the neighborhood of 1500 souls. Business was brisk. The surrounding country is an excellent farming district, and large quantities of agricultural products were exported. A large steam grist mill, a woolen factory, a starch factory, two flourishing brick-yards, two extensive foundries, one on the Blairsville and the other on the Bairdstown side of the river, and two or three prosperous tanneries, contributed to swell the amount of exports from the port of Blairsville to a respectable figure. Capacious wharves had been built along the slackwater upon which the town is situated, and boats were at any time to be seen lying there, either shipping or discharging their cargoes. The "tarry sailor-man" and the typical mule team were every-

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\*Day's Hist. Col., page 379.



day sights in the goodly streets of Blairsville. But all these have now disappeared.

It may be interesting to the present race of Blairsvillers to read the opinion formed by a stranger of Blairsville and its society more than thirty years ago. We extract from a letter written by a tourist, June 18th, 1833, at Blairsville. He says: "I address you now from a town, which, as you see it marked on the map, is a place of minor consideration, but which in reality, considered as a point in the chain of public improvements which connects the eastern and western parts of the State, is of vast importance. Blairsville, a few years since, consisted of a solitary public house, at which the traveler across the mountains might stop to refresh himself and his beast; now it contains a large number of substantially built and handsome brick edifices—several churches—a market and school house, and not less than four or five well kept hotels. It has sprung up suddenly, but its duration will not be the less permanent.

"Blairsville stands on the western\* bank of the Conemaugh river, a stream flowing into the Allegheny river, about thirty miles from Pittsburg, and is distant from that city by

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\*This is incorrect. Blairsville is situated on the *eastern* side of the Conemaugh.

land, forty miles; by the course of the river seventy. This river is one of the most beautiful and romantic streams in the west. I have passed along its banks for some distance, and been strongly reminded of our favorite Schuylkill, which, in some respects, it strongly resembles. Its course is meandering and irregular. Along this river a canal has been made, east to Johnstown, and west to Pittsburgh, forming the western division of the Pennsylvania Canal. \* \* \* \*

“The society of Blairsville is remarkable for its intelligence. I say this not to deteriorate from the respectability of other western towns, but because from personal intercourse and observation, I have had abundant opportunities to ascertain the fact. We of the east do not properly estimate the worth of character which exists in the west. We are too apt to fancy that the well-informed—the statesman—the philosopher—the man of breeding, is only to be found in large cities. This is a great mistake as applied to western Pennsylvania. With the most of those to whom I have been introduced across the mountains, my acquaintance has been extremely pleasant, and the kindness and attentions of the Blairsville people I shall never forget.” \*

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\* See Philadelphia Gazette, June, 1833.

A newspaper was started here about the year 1825. It was called, if we mistake not, "The Blairsville Record and Westmoreland Advertiser." The first editor, we believe, was a Mr. McFarland. It soon dropped a part of the name, and was called merely the "Blairsville Record." It was successively styled the "Record," "Citizen," "Apalachian," "True American," and "Journal," and was carried on by different parties to the year 1861, when it foundered in an open sea. Down to 1849, when Messrs. Matthias & Caldwell took charge of it, it had been the avowed exponent of the Democratic party in the county; but in the hands of these gentlemen it soon lost the characteristics of a party organ, and made its appearance in the garb of a neutral. Mr. T. S. Reid, who succeeded in the proprietorship in 1855, changed the name from the "Apalachian" to the "True American," and the paper itself from a neutral to a strong Republican sheet. About this time a new paper was started in the town under the auspices of the Democrats, and bore the time-honored appellation: "The Blairsville Record." This paper was kept afloat until the year 1863, when it also went down. In the spring of 1865, the Republican paper was revived under the name

of the "New Era," of which Wm. R. Boyers, Esq., is editor.

The decade commencing with 1850, opened with bright prospects for Blairsville. Business on the canal was brisk, and the amount of shipments and imports at that place exhibit a state of great prosperity. For 1851, the receipts at that port amounted to nearly \$11,500. Two extensive yards were kept in constant employ in building or repairing boats. In 1851, the Pennsylvania Railroad was finished as far as that place, and passengers for the west here took the boat for Pittsburg. These were gala days for Blairsville. It was, however, but a repetition of the short-lived prosperity of 1830. Thousands of emigrants and others passed through the town every week, and of course left behind them more or less of their specie. Blairsville thus suddenly became a great transshipping port. A new town called O'Harra, was laid out by Hr. William Maher, around the railroad depot, on the southern side of Blairsville, and town lots were readily sold for hundreds of dollars that could now be purchased for perhaps as many tens. Fine houses were erected, and every thing was carried along on the top-wave of success. But all this prosperity was evanes-

cent, as it had been in the former case. The railroad was finished through to Pittsburg in the latter part of 1852, and again the merchants and inn-keepers of Blairsville were compelled to see the trade and travel "pass by on the other side." No more car-loads of obese emigrants from the "Faderland" came to Blairsville with their clinking pouches of gold and silver. No more hack-loads of well-dressed ladies and gentlemen were seen approaching the hotels, to the inexpressible delight of mine host, whose practised eye saw his account in them at a glance.

From this time down to 1860, the town steadily declined. In that year the population was found to have receded to 1000 souls; just what it was in 1840. The Blairsville Branch railroad that connects with the main road at a point about three miles from the town, about the year 1856 was extended to the town of Indiana; and though the latter was greatly benefited, Blairsville was improved thereby no whit. Her fate seemed to be sealed. She was apparently one of the "doomed cities." Her people had nothing more to do. The town was finished; and the inhabitants sat down peacefully to await the providence of God.

But from this depression Blairsville is rapidly

recovering. The construction of the Western Pennsylvania Railroad, commenced about 1854, and then abandoned for some years, has contributed a fresh impetus to the prosperity of the town, and given the citizens heart of hope. Some improvements have been made since 1860, and other and more important ones are in contemplation. The neighboring hills abound in iron ore, coal, limestone, and so forth, of the best quality, and favorable signs of oil have been discovered in the valleys. There is no conceivable reason why manufactures of different kinds, and especially of iron, should not be carried on in Blairsville with the greatest success. The population now (1865) is said to be over 1500. This shows a wonderful reactionary tendency; and as her prosperity this time seems based on a more stable foundation, Blairsville will yet arise to the dignified position for which God and nature have designed her.



## CHAPTER VII.

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### OTHER TOWNS AND VILLAGES.

#### CAMBRIA COUNTY.\*

The villages of Cambria county may be divided into two classes—those which lie in the north of the county, and are of spontaneous growth, and those which lie in the south of the county, and have sprung up in consequence of the different lines of public improvements.

The villages in the north of the county are Ebensburg, Carrolltown, Loretto, St. Augustine, Chess Springs, Munster, Belsano, and Plottsville. Ebensburg has been already described.

*Carrolltown* is eight miles north of Ebensburg, and is connected with it by a plank road. It is located on an eminence. The original Carrolltown lies on the south side of the hill; but the part of the village more lately built extends over the crest of the hill, down the northern slope into the valley beyond. It is about half a mile in length. The Catholic

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\* For this description of the towns and villages in Cambria county, I am indebted to my excellent friend, S. B. McCormick, Esq., late County Superintendent of Cambria county.

church is a large brick building, situated on the highest ground in the village, and about midway between the extreme ends. The public school-house is similarly located, and stands on the opposite side of the street from the church. It contains a thriving population, and is surrounded by a productive country and thrifty farmers.

*Loretto* is situated about five miles east of Ebensburg, on a public road leading from Cresson to Carrolltown. It is located on the southern slope of a hill, and contains quite a number of inhabitants. The Sisters of Charity have a female school in operation in this place, and the Franciscan Brothers have a college with ample grounds attached, and which is largely attended, built in close proximity to the village. There is also a very large brick Catholic church in this village.

*Chess Springs* lies eight miles northeast of Loretto, on a public road leading from Loretto to White township. It is built on elevated ground which slightly slopes westwardly, and contains some fifty dwellings. Beautiful farms surround the place, and it is healthful, and supplied with excellent water. There is a steam saw mill in the vicinity. This village might be called the Buenos Ayres of Cambria county.

*St. Augustine* is three miles northeast of Chess Springs, situated on the same public road. The ridge which runs along between the valleys near the place, is called the *Loop*. On that ridge there is at one place a slight depression of the surface, and in this depression, there are cross roads, at which the village is built. There is a frame Catholic church, and a public school-house in the place.

*Munster* is the next town in size of the northern class, and is situated four miles east of Ebensburg on the turnpike road. The Ebensburg and Cresson railroad runs through the place. It is built on a level plot of ground, and is surrounded by a great number of productive farms. It contains a small population, but no public buildings.

*Belsano* is located about eight miles southwest of Ebensburg, on the Clay Pike, leading to Indiana borough. It is a small place, in an unproductive section of country, and is now almost isolated from the business world.

*Plottsville* lies eight miles north of Carrolltown, on the road leading to the Cherry Tree, a small town in Indiana county. It is a small village of little importance.

The towns in the southern portion of the county are Johnstown and surrounding bor-

oughs, Summerhill, Wilmore, Foot-of-Four, Summit, Cresson, Gallitzin, Perkinsville, Scalp-Level, Geistown, and Parkstown. Of these Summerhill, Wilmore, Foot-of-Four, and Summitville are relics of the Allegheny Portage Railroad, which in its time ran through them, and which gave origin to their existence.—Johnstown and its suburbs have been already described.

*Summerhill*, which should have been termed Winter Hollow, is located in a narrow valley between hills through which the Portage Railroad ran. The Pennsylvania Railroad runs close by the old village, and sustains its vitality. It contains two or three hundred inhabitants.

*Wilmore* is similarly situated, a few miles east of Summerhill. The Pennsylvania Railroad passes near the place. It was once a brisk village, but is now decaying rapidly. There are many beautiful and productive farms in the vicinity.

*Foot-of-Four* was built at the foot of plane No. 4, on the Portage Railroad. The Pennsylvania Railroad runs close by this village; nevertheless, it is in a state of dilapidation. The town is called Foot-of-Four, the station Lilly's Station, and the Post Office Hemlock.

*Summitville* was built on the summit of the mountain, at the head of the planes on the Portage Railroad. It is now a decayed village, although there is a fine Catholic church in the place. It is half a mile from Cresson, on the Pennsylvania Railroad.

*Cresson*, on the Pennsylvania Railroad, is four miles east of the Foot-of-Four, and is a watering place, much frequented in the summer months by visitors from the cities. Otherwise it is an unimportant place.

*Gallitzin* is situated at the east end of the tunnel on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and also comprises Tunnel Hill, on the top of the mountain above said tunnel. It lies partly in Blair county. It is a growing place.

*Perkinsville* is a small village on the Canal three miles west of Johnstown.

*Scalp-Level* and *Geistown* are small villages in Richland township, towards Somerset county.

*Parkstown* is a small place on the old Frankstown road, about two miles east of Johnstown.

*Benscreek*.—This is a small village surrounding a furnace of the same name, situated about three miles south of Johnstown, on the Somerset road. A portion of the village is in Cambria and a portion in Somerset county.

The furnace, which has been in operation for many years, is not now in blast; and, as a consequence, the population is somewhat thinned out. It was once a thriving settlement.

*Mill Creek.*—This is another village, similar in its origin and surroundings to Benscreek, situated five miles southeast of Johnstown, at the base of the Laurel Hill, and is connected with Benscreek by a tram railroad, five miles in length. The furnace is not at present in blast, and the inhabitants are not numerous, nor in a prosperous condition.

*Cambria Furnace.*—About five miles northwest of Johnstown, and near one mile from the Conemaugh river, northward, there is a furnace located, near the base of Laurel Hill, with the foregoing name and title, surrounded by a smart little village. Like the other two furnaces, it is not now in operation. All these furnaces formerly belonged to Shoenberger & Co., and are now, with the lands adjoining, the property of the Cambria Iron Company.

#### SOMERSET COUNTY.

*Davidsville* is a small village on the plank road leading from Johnstown to Stoystown. It is much frequented in the sleighing season



by gay companies of young folks from the former place, who believe that a good supper and a merry dance repay them for the journey of sixteen miles there and back.

*Stoystown* lies on the same road, ten miles beyond Davidsville. This is an old village. It was laid out by an old Revolutionary soldier named Stoy. We have already spoken of the ruins of a house here visible at a late period, which was said to have been built in 1758.—This town was incorporated as a borough in 1819. It is a flourishing town, and has a population of several hundreds.

Six miles from Stoystown on the same road is *Snydersville*, a small town containing a post office, a tannery, and several houses.

Twelve miles from Johnstown, on the turnpike leading to Somerset we come to *Forwardstown*. This is a small village.

Six miles from Forwardstown is *Jennerville*, on the same road. It contains a store, a tavern, and so forth.

*Sipesville* is a small town on the same road, four miles from Jennerville. It contains a couple of stores, a tavern, and so on.

*Jenner Cross Roads* is a well known point at the crossing of the Somerset and the Pittsburg turnpikes, a couple of miles from Jennerville.

## WESTMORELAND COUNTY.

*Conemaugh Furnace* lies on the Pennsylvania Railroad seven miles west of Johnstown. A furnace was built here in 1839 or 1840, by Messrs. McGill, Foster & White. It was kept in operation for some time, but has been abandoned for many years. The stack alone remains to indicate that it ever had an existence. A number of people still live here in the houses that were put up for the accommodation of the furnace hands. This place lies right in the gorge of the Laurel Hill, upon one of the most beautiful stretches of water along this entire river. The scenery around is of the wildest and most romantic description.

*Nineveh Station* lies two miles west of Conemaugh furnace. Here are a water-station, a store, and several very comfortable residences. Large quantities of bark, shook, staves, and so forth, are shipped from this point.

*New Florence* is six miles west of Nineveh station. This is a pleasant and thriving town, surrounded by a rich, productive country. It was laid out about the year 1851 or 1852. In this village are several stores, a hotel, a couple

of churches, a school house, and a number of fine residences. The people of New Florence are distinguished for their intelligence, respectability, and morality. Before the war a fine classical school was located in this town.—Laurel Hill furnace, an exploded enterprise, is situated at the foot of the Laurel Hill, at the distance of a mile or two from this town.

Three miles west of New Florence is *Lockport*. This is a small village lying on the canal and the railroad. A beautiful stone aqueduct of five arches here crosses the river. In this village are a wood and water station, a couple of stores, school house, and establishments for the manufacture of fire brick. There are also the remains of an old furnace.

About three miles from Lockport in a southerly direction is a small hamlet known as *Covodesville*. It is the property of the Hon. John Covode, the distinguished politician, who has his home here. This village contains a large woolen factory, saw mill, school house, and so forth.

*Bolivar* lies one mile west of Lockport. In this village are extensive fire-brick establishments. A foot-bridge crosses the Conemaugh, and a neat stone aqueduct a small stream that flows into the river at this place from the southward.

Proceeding along the railroad five miles further, we come to the *Blairsville Intersection*, where the branch railroad leading to Blairsville and Indiana intersects the main road. Here are a station, telegraph office, post office, a hotel, and some five or six dwelling houses.

In going from Bolivar to the Blairsville Intersection, we pass through the Chestnut Ridge by a valley apparently cut by the river for its own accommodation. The scenery along here is exceedingly wild and picturesque. Coming down from the southward, and splitting the Ridge at about right angles with the river valley, is a deep gorge known as the Pack Saddle. A high "dump" crosses this gorge at its mouth, upon which the track of the railroad is laid. Immediately opposite to the mouth of the Pack Saddle is the abrupt termination of a lofty mountain range that comes down from the north. The work of constructing the railroad through the Chestnut Ridge was a difficult enterprise, and the classic region of the Pack Saddle was the scene of many a hard fought battle between the "Corkonians" and "Far-downers," whom the work had brought together.

Four miles west of the Intersection we come to *Hillside*. This is important as a wood and

water station on the railroad. It contains a store, a large steam tannery, and several dwelling houses.

About two miles from Hillside, at the base of the Chestnut Ridge, is a remarkable cavern known as the Bear Cave. It was explored more than thirty years ago. It consists of one main entrance, which, at a short distance from the mouth, branches off into innumerable and hitherto interminable ramifications, and these again into countless other branches, forming, on the whole, a labyrinth that would have puzzled the brain of Theseus himself.

A few years ago, we formed one of a party of five that visited this subterranean wonder. We went provided with light and with a large ball of strong twine. Fastening one end of this twine near the mouth of the cavern, we continued to unroll the ball as we proceeded, thus having a certain clue to find our way back. On our return, we wound up the twine as we came along, and, by measuring the string afterward, we were able to tell the distance we had penetrated. We found it to be over five hundred paces, or more than a quarter of a mile! After we had gone this distance, the end of the passage seemed as far off as ever.

The reader must not imagine this cavern to resemble in any respect the famous Mammoth Cave, in Kentucky. This, so far as it has ever been explored, is only a long, narrow, sinuous passage, or rather a system of such passages; sometimes, it is true, expanding into little chambers hung with lack-lustre stalactites; but, for the greater part of the way, only the narrow passage we have described, as though an earthquake had partly rent the mountain in twain. We remember walking along the crumbling edge of a precipice, steadying ourselves by the walls, while below us was an abyss so deep, so dark, so profound that it seemed to be bottomless. A single false step here would send the thoughtless adventurer down into depths immeasurable.

So contracted is this passage in some places that the explorer is obliged to make his way on his hands and knees,—nay, he sometimes, from his longitudinal posture, would seem to be a sharer in the sentence of the serpent, and lucky is he if he doesn't have to eat dirt on the way.

Visitors to this cavern should enter it only in dry weather. The channel of a little mountain stream passes through it. This in wet weather of course becomes swollen, and must nearly, if not quite, stop up the passage



through this labyrinth. The fate of one who should become thus immured may be easily imagined. The narrow escape from such a fate which we ourself made on that occasion, has made a lasting impression on our mind.

There have been many stories circulated in that vicinity about spacious apartments, magnificent with natural decorations, of beautiful altars, and columns, and other wonderful formations, that have been discovered in this cavern; but upon our visit we saw nothing of the kind—nothing in the main but a long, tortuous maze with blackened walls and uneven floors; dark, yawning chasms, that seemed to have no bottom; and gloomy side-passages into which if one should wander he might never return.

*Derry Station*, an important point on the Pennsylvania Railroad, lies four miles west of Hillside. This place is rapidly improving, and promises at an early day to be a town of no mean pretensions. A number of fine houses have been recently put up, and others are in course of building. A road to Ligonier and other towns in the Ligonier Valley, passes through this place. At the distance of two or three miles from Derry station, there is a prominent peak of the Chestnut Ridge, known

as Duncan's Knob. This mountain range being the westernmost outlier of the Alleghanies, furnishes from its exposed hights many fine and extensive prospects. Of all these exposed points, Duncan's Knob perhaps affords the most expansive view. We visited it some years ago. We were able to see plainly the towns of Jacksonville and Indiana, and all the intervening and surrounding country. Some six or eight towns and villages were distinctly visible. And yet the distance from where we stood to the town of Indiana, which must be in the neighborhood of twenty-five miles, compared with the distance which we could see beyond that town, seemed to us to bear about the same ratio that an inch bears to a foot-rule. The broad expanse of hill and dale, meadow and woodland, stretched away to the north and west until it gradually blended in an indistinct haze with the far-off horizon. A correct idea of the extent and magnificence of our globe can only be obtained by viewing it from such a standpoint as this.

And standing on that rugged peak, with this vast amphitheater at our feet, we thought of the beautiful lines of Goldsmith :

"E'en now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,  
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend ;  
And placed on high, above the storm's career,  
Look downward where a hundred realms appear."

*New Derry*, an old village in spite of its name, is situated a short distance north of Derry station. It is a pleasant little town lying in the midst of a rich farming district, and contains several churches, shops, stores, and so on.

*St. Clair* lies on the railroad a couple of miles west of Derry station. It is an unimportant railroad station.

*Latrobe* is three miles west of St. Clair. It lies on both sides of the railroad, upon a broad, level loop of land formed by a bend in the Loyalhanna. This is an important, thriving town. It was laid out about the year 1851, and has already grown to be a town of considerable size. It contains several fine churches and hotels, two or three large flouring mills, a car manufactory, and a number of stores, shops, and so forth. The surrounding country is highly fertile, and is well cultivated. This village is yet in its infancy, and will doubtless soon become one of our most flourishing inland towns.

*Youngstown* is situated on the turnpike about a mile south of Latrobe. It is a country village of very modest pretensions. It contains several churches, stores, hotels, and so forth. Contiguous to the village are two large establishments for the education of youth. These

belong to the Roman Catholic church, and are known, the one as St. Vincent's, and the other as St. Xavier's : the latter for the education of young ladies, and the former for young gentlemen. These institutions are well patronized, well conducted, and stand high in the estimation of the church to which they belong.

*Ligonier* is on the same turnpike, about ten miles east of Youngstown. We have already mentioned that here was a stronghold during the Indian troubles of the last century. At the time of Forbes' expedition it was known as Loyalhanna. It may be remembered that after the defeat of Major Grant at Fort Pitt, the enemy attacked Colonel Boquet in his camp at Loyalhanna, but were driven off with loss. Shortly after this we find that the place was known as Fort Ligonier. An attack was also made upon this fort in 1763, but as unsuccessfully as before. The site of the old fort is still remembered, and numerous bullets, and other relics of the battle-field, have been found in the neighborhood. Ligonier is a pleasant village, and finely located. The surrounding country, which is known as Ligonier valley, is one of the most beautiful and productive districts in western Pennsylvania. The citizens of Ligonier are a quiet, unambitious, in-

telligent people, and their town is one of the most pleasant villages to be found.

*Oak Grove* and *Waterford* are two small villages lying on the road leading from Ligonier to Johnstown, and at the distances respectively of three miles and five miles from the former. In the neighborhood is a furnace.

*Laughlinstown* is a small place three miles east of Ligonier, and just at the foot of the Laurel Hill. Like all turnpike towns, it is going to decay. Modern improvements have supplanted in a great measure the turnpikes and canals of a former era, and the old-fashioned roadside villages are finding themselves left "out in the cold." In the vicinity of Laughlinstown are two or three furnaces that, we believe, are now entirely abandoned.

*Bairdstown* lies on the Conemaugh, just opposite Blairsville, with which it is connected by a bridge. The turnpike passes through it, and also the obsolete Pennsylvania Canal. This town lies chiefly along the face of a hill called Baird's Hill. When the canal was in all its glory, Bairdstown contained several extensive boat-yards. The sides of the canal were covered with large warehouses, stables, and so forth, some of which have since disappeared, while the rest have fallen into disuse. There

is but little business now carried on in the town.

*Livermore* is a small village on the canal, about six miles below Bairdstown. The Western Pennsylvania Railroad now passes through it, which will preserve it from absolute decay.

*New Alexandria*, or, as it is more frequently called, Dennisontown, is on the old northern turnpike, about eight miles west of Blairsville. It is an incorporated town, and has a population of three or four thousand inhabitants. It is not now as thriving as when the turnpike was in more general use.

*Fairfield* lies four miles south of New Florence, on a public road leading from the latter place to Ligonier. It contains two churches, a school house, several stores, a couple of hotels, and other public places of business. In the churchyard lie the remains of several of the early pioneers of this section of country, who were killed by the Indians,

#### INDIANA COUNTY.

*Nineveh* is an old, decayed village, on the canal, about one mile north of Nineveh station. It contains a saw mill, tavern, and a few dwelling houses.



*Centerville* is also on the canal, lying immediately opposite New Florence. A bridge across the Conemaugh connects the two villages. Centerville is an old town, and was formerly in a more prosperous condition than at present. An old Indian village is said to have stood near where Centerville now stands. This is believed to have been called Kiskemeneco, and was visited by Post and his party in November, 1758. At three o'clock of the same day on which they passed through Kick-enapawling, they came to Kiskemeneco, which Post describes as "an old Indian town, a rich bottom, well timbered, good fine grass, well watered, and lays waste since the war began." It was within half-a-day's ride of Kick-enapawling, and from the name was evidently situated somewhere upon the Kiskiminetas or Conemaugh river.

*Fillmore*, on the Conemaugh, just opposite to Livermore, is a small village. A bridge connects the two places.

*Saltsburg* lies at the confluence of the Conemaugh and Loyalhanna. It is about twelve miles from Blairsville. It derives its name from the numerous salt works in its vicinity. The discovery of salt at this place has been already described. This was one of the earliest

permanent settlements in the county, as there were cabins standing here as early as 1800. Saltsburg is a thriving little town. The Pennsylvania canal and the Western Pennsylvania Railroad pass through it. It contains a number of stores, hotels, shops, and so forth.

*Clarksburg* is on the Black Legs creek, five miles northeast of Saltsburg. It contains two churches, several stores, a school house, tannery, a grist mill, a saw mill, a tavern, and other buildings.

*Elder's Ridge* is four miles north-west of Saltsburg, on the road leading from Saltsburg to Elderton, in Armstrong county. It is a small village, and only important as being the seat of a first class Presbyterian academy, which has long been conducted by the Rev. Alex. Donaldson, D. D., a gentleman of fine abilities and of eminent success in his profession.

*Lewisville* is five miles east of Clarksburg, on the road going from Clarksburg to Blairsville. It is a small town. It contains a church, store, post office, tannery, and other buildings.

*Jacksonville* lies on the road leading from Saltsburg to Indiana, and is ten miles from the latter town. It also contains a fine academy, and is a thriving little place.

*Homer* is a smart village on the Indiana Branch railroad, about six miles from Indiana. It was laid out about the year 1855, by the late William Wilson, Esq. It contains a church, school house, several stores, a hotel, grist mill, a large steam saw mill, a tannery, and other improvements. The place is improving rapidly, and seems destined to become an important town.

*Mechanicsburg* is a pleasant, prosperous village on the road leading from Homer to Strongstown, six miles from Homer. It contains an academy, several stores, hotels, and so forth.

*New Washington* is on the northern turnpike two miles west of Armagh. It contains a tavern, store, and so forth.

*Armagh* is an old village on the turnpike, about fourteen miles east of Blairsville, and two miles from Nineveh station. It lies near the base of the Laurel Hill on the western side. Its location is elevated and healthful, and the surrounding country is beautiful and fertile. The village contains a church, store, hotel, shoo-shop, and other buildings. It is not so prosperous now as when the turnpike was the great highway from the east to the west.

The *Indiana Iron Works* are situated in a

deep valley about two miles from Conemaugh furnace. A furnace was built here by Henry Noble, about the year 1837. Having passed into the hands of Elias Baker, about the year 1848 it was torn down, and a new furnace built. A forge was built close by a short time afterward. It has gone to decay. The furnace is at present in successful operation. A bucket factory formerly stood on the site of these works. It was built about the year 1828, and was owned by Hart & Thompson. The Indiana Iron Works are at present better known as Baker's furnace.

*Blacklick Furnace* was built in 1844, by David Stewart. It is situated three miles from Armagh, on a public road leading from the Indiana Iron Works to Strongstown. It is not now in operation.

In this neighborhood are two other abandoned enterprises of the same kind:—*Buena Vista Furnace* and *Eliza Furnace*. The first of these is on the road leading from Armagh to Indiana, about two miles north of the former town. It was built by Henry M'Clelland about the year 1847. *Eliza Furnace* was built by David Ritter, about the same time. It was located near the junction of the north and south forks of the Blacklick, about six miles east of Armagh.

## CHAPTER VIII.

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### THE CAMBRIA IRON WORKS.

If Johnstown is the metropolis of the Conemaugh valley, it is owing entirely to the Cambria Iron Works. We have seen that prior to 1853, at which time these works were established, the town was a rather unimportant affair. It is true, the Pennsylvania Railroad, which was completed about this time, might have had the effect of causing some improvement to be made in it, though to what extent it is of course impossible to say. But whatever advantage the construction of that thoroughfare might have been to the town, there is no question that it would have been vastly more than counterpoised by the subsequent sale and abandonment of the old main line.

The credit of establishing this mammoth enterprise is mainly due to the Hon. George S. King, of Johnstown. Mr. King, in company with others, owned several furnaces, and large tracts of ore land in the neighborhood of this place. About 1852, stockholders and capital were secured, and a company was forth-

with organized under the general manufacturing law of June 14th, 1836. The capital required by the act of incorporation was one million of dollars. Operations were at once commenced. A large and well constructed frame building was put up. The building was in the form of a cross; the main part was six hundred feet long and one hundred feet wide, and the transverse part three hundred and fifty feet in length and seventy-five feet in width. It contained a large amount of heavy machinery, which was set in motion by five powerful steam engines.

The works were kept in operation by the original company for some time, but did not prosper. In May, 1855, they were leased for a term of years by Wood, Morrell & Co. In the hands of this company new life was infused into the enterprise. The works were set going to their fullest capacity, and an air of activity, energy and prosperity was everywhere apparent.

In the summer of 1857, however, a casualty befel the rolling mill that threatened at the time to put a quietus to its career of prosperity and usefulness, and plunge the town back into the state of torpidity from which it was just emerging. About six o'clock, Saturday even-



ing, August 1st, of that year, the mill was discovered to be on fire. The fire had originally broken out in a small out building contiguous to the mill, from which it was speedily communicated to the latter. The lumber of which the building was composed being thoroughly dried by the sun of summer and the constant heat of the furnaces within, took fire with the quickness of tinder, and in a comparatively few minutes after the first outbreak of the fire, the whole immense structure was enveloped in flames. The tidings spread through the town with the greatest rapidity, and in a very brief space of time a vast concourse of spectators had collected to witness the destruction they were powerless to prevent. The scene struck terror and dismay to the hearts of the assembled thousands.\*

The work of destruction, however, was soon over, and the spot where a few hours before had stood the mammoth rolling mill, was covered only with blackened and smouldering ruins. The mill had contained twenty-one double and eleven single heating furnaces, and a large amount of valuable machinery, together with a set of rolls of an improved kind that had been put up but a day or two before. The

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\* See Cambria Tribune, August 5, 1857.

loss amounted to fully one hundred thousand dollars ; and, but for the massive and durable character of the principal part of the machinery, it would have been vastly greater.

The work of erecting a new mill was immediately commenced. The rubbish was cleared away and temporary wooden sheds were put up, in which business was at once resumed. These were replaced as fast as possible by a building of a more substantial and creditable character. By the latter part of the same month the works were again in operation as vigorously and prosperously as before, and the rebuilding of the mill carried on to a considerable stage. It is a remarkable fact that this building, one of the largest and best constructed works of the kind in the world, was erected over the heads of the numerous workmen connected with the mill, without causing a single accident to any one, or interfering in any degree with the course of operations within.

The new building is of brick, and is covered with a roof of slate. It stands upon the site of the old mill, as we have said, though it is somewhat larger in every direction. It was completed in 1858. In 1863, another mill, three hundred feet long by one hundred feet wide, was built. It stands parallel with the old

mill, and not more than thirty or forty feet distant, and is connected with it by a wing. Another mill is now in course of erection. It is attached to the northern end of the transverse portion of the old mill. It will cover over an acre of ground. These buildings are designed to be all of the same style of architecture and finish. There are now in operation twenty-two heating furnaces and thirty double puddling furnaces, a train of rail-rolls, squeezers, and other machinery necessary to a complete rolling mill. The machinery used in these works is of the most improved kinds. There are three vertical steam engines, and the fly-wheels are immense castings weighing forty tons, and make as high as seventy-five or eighty revolutions per minute. A writer in one of the daily papers published in Pittsburgh, thus describes the process of manufacturing railroad iron at this mill: "The ore is taken from the mines near the works, and after being put through the roasting process, which requires some time, it is thrown into the blast furnaces, of which there are four in number, capable of running one hundred and ninety tons each per week; thence the metal is transferred to the puddling furnaces, and after undergoing the process of puddling, it goes thence

through the squeezers, and thence through the puddle rolls, when it is ready for the heating furnaces. After being heated in the latter, it is prepared for its final rolling into bars." These works employ about twenty-seven hundred hands, and from three hundred to four hundred head of horses and mules. The amount of finished rails made here in the year 1864, was about forty thousand tons. The capacity of the works, when the part now building is completed, will be from 60 to 70,000 tons. There are over thirty-five engines employed in driving the works; the waste heat from the heating and puddling furnaces generating all the steam required. A visit to these works after night, when they are in full operation, causes one to think of old Vulcan and his assistants forging thunderbolts for Jove in their smithy under Mount Etna.

In 1864, valuable additions were made to these works by the building of a new blacksmith shop, machine and pattern shop, and a foundry. The blacksmith shop is an octagon of 74 feet diameter. It contains sixteen fires, which are blown by means of a large fan that is kept in motion by steam. The fire-places are smoke-consuming, and the interior of this model blacksmith shop, which is neatly paint-

ed and whitewashed, is as clean and tidy as a dry goods store. The machine and pattern shop is two hundred and twelve feet long, and sixty-four feet wide. The foundry is one hundred and forty-eight feet in length, and seventy in breadth. These new buildings all stand contiguous to the main works. They are of brick, and covered with slate, and are furnished with all appliances calculated to secure comfort to the workmen, and to facilitate their work.

Besides the large quantities of metal manufactured for the use of these works by the furnaces mentioned above, vast amounts of pig metal, worn out railroad iron, car wheels, and old metal of a miscellaneous description, are used. The metal yard, where the shipping and unshipping of rails and iron are carried on, presents a scene of activity second only to the interior of the mill itself. Acres of ground, almost, are sometimes literally covered to the depth of many feet with the new rails ready for transportation, and old metal brought there to be worked over.

Perhaps no iron works in the world are so well situated with reference to the raw material to be worked up, as well as to facilities for shipping its products to market. The ore,

coal, and so forth, necessary to the carrying on of the works are right at hand. Railways are constructed leading from the mines right to the place where these minerals are wanted, without having to transport them a long distance, and subject them to repeated handling. The great Pennsylvania Railroad passes within a few rods of the works, and branches connect with it, thus affording excellent means for shipping the rails here manufactured to every section of the country.

For the accommodation of the employees of this immense enterprise, comfortable dwelling houses have been erected by the company. These houses are to be counted by scores. They do not present that squalid, crowded, uncomfortable appearance which is characteristic of the tenement houses that are usually huddled around similar works. These houses are large and well constructed, and are in general better adapted than three-fourths of the dwelling houses any where. Each family has its suite of apartments distinct and separate from its neighbors, or in many instances a house to itself, roomy and comfortable. These dwellings are rented only to the employees of the mill. The rents are not high, and the houses are kept in constant good



repair. This company can afford to be munificent towards its employees, and it is so.

Connected with these works are stores and shops of different kinds. There is a large dry goods store, a grocery, and a meat market. There is a blacksmith shop, a carpenter shop, and shops where shoemaking, tailoring, painting, cabinet making, wagon making, harness making, and so forth, are carried on. These various establishments do an immense amount of business, which is felt all through the town. To take away the rolling mill and its influences, Johnstown would be something like the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out. It is the all-important feature of the town—the great centre of industry, from which all other enterprises receive their stimulus. The amount of business transacted by this establishment may be judged from the fact that the internal revenue tax alone, paid by this company for the year 1865, will be over *two hundred thousand dollars*, or more than one half of the total amount collected in the district during the year. We venture to say that there are but few corporations in the country that pay a larger tax of this kind. The pre-eminent success of this establishment is greatly attributable to the excellent management of

Daniel J. Morrell, Esq., the accomplished resident partner of the firm, and Mr. George Fritz, the efficient engineer of the works. In the hands of these gentlemen the Cambria Iron Works have acquired an extent, completeness, and influence unsurpassed by any similar works in the world.

## CHAPTER IX.

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### OTHER ENTERPRISES.

#### THE JOHNSTOWN MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

This company was organized in the year 1864. Its operations are necessarily yet in their incipency. The company comprises some of the wealthiest and ablest members of the two greatest corporations in Pennsylvania—the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Cambria Iron companies. The business of this company is at present limited to the Woolen Mill and the Steam Brickyard. The woolen factory, begun in 1864 and finished in 1865, is situated in the new and what promises to be the prosperous town of Woodvale. The main building is fifty by seventy-five feet, and to this is added a wing forty by twenty-five feet. The walls of the entire structure are of brick, and four stories high, the distance from floor to floor being about twelve feet. The frame-work is of heavy timber.\* The roof is covered with

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\* Johnstown Tribune, Jan. 27th, 1865.

slate, and the whole surmounted by a handsome cupola. The woodwork is all neatly painted, and the building altogether presents an imposing appearance, standing, as it does, entirely detached from any other building. A boiler and dye-house, boarding-house, store-rooms, and dwelling houses, have also been erected, all on a scale corresponding with the extent of the factory, and the means of this company. The entire machinery of this large establishment will be of the most improved kinds. Constant employment will be given to about one hundred and fifty operatives. The agent for the factory advertises for 300,000 pounds of wool per annum, thus encouraging the business of wool-growing in this and the adjacent counties. This business ought to be very productive in this mountainous region, and with the reliable home market which this establishment will afford, it ought to become the most remunerative employment in which our farmers can engage. This factory will gradually attract around it other industrial establishments, until the pleasant little village of Woodvale will become the most busy and prosperous suburb of Johnstown.

On the opposite side of the Conemaugh

from Woodvale is the extensive Steam Brick-yard of this company. The old Portage Railroad passes through it, and a track leading from the brickyard to Conemaugh station, a distance of nearly a mile, where it intersects with the Pennsylvania Railroad, affords an easy means of transportation for the bricks made here. The extent of this establishment, and the *modus operandi* of brick making, as practiced here, may be seen from the following account chiefly compiled from the "Johnstown Tribune," January 27th, 1865:

We found sixteen hands at work in the various departments of the brickyard. The brick are manufactured by the patent steam machinery of Chambers, Brother & Co., of Philadelphia. The clay, which is obtained from a four-foot bed covering ten or fifteen acres of the company's lands immediately adjoining the factory, is converted into brick ready for drying at the rate of a cart-load every ten minutes, or forty-eight bricks every minute. The process is this: The clay is dumped from the cart into a hopper, whence, after being thoroughly pulverized, it is forced, in a continuous thread, through an aperture of proper shape, and is taken up by a leather or gum belt which is kept in motion by a series

of little wheels. This belt carries the moulded clay to a revolving knife, which cuts off a brick at each revolution. The brick thus formed is picked up by another belt, which carries it under a box from which sand is constantly sifted, after which it is, in winter, carried to the drying-house by hand. There are two large drying-houses, each forty by seventy feet. The bricks are laid upon the floors, and dried ready for the kiln in about thirty-six hours. These floors are heated by flues—forty flues to each floor—the heat being generated by twenty-four furnaces in all. For summer drying they have numerous spacious sheds. The bricks are burnt in the usual manner. They are much smoother than those made in the old-fashioned way, and are said to be much stronger and more durable. The company have just completed a new kiln of a capacity for burning 300,000 bricks at once. The number of hands now employed is about thirty.

The Johnstown Manufacturing Company possess a cash capital of two hundred thousand dollars. It and Woodvale, and the brick factory, are now established institutions of our town. Because of the magnitude of the enterprise which they unitedly represent, and of the vast influence for good they are destined



to exert upon the future of this locality, we have deemed them worthy of this extended notice.

The engine used in this establishment is one of a forty horse power, and the pressure used in forcing the clay through the funnel, is equal to a weight of seven hundred tons, and yet the machinery works as smoothly, and with as much apparent ease, as the turning of a grindstone.\*

With all these vast facilities, these brick-making works are constantly kept in operation to their full capacity, and yet the supply is unequal to the demand. This fact alone is one of the strongest evidences of the wonderful improvements continually going on in Johnstown and vicinity; for scarcely a brick of all the hundreds of thousands made here every month is ever carried to a distance.

#### THE JOHNSTOWN MECHANICAL WORKS.

This establishment is located in Conemaugh Borough. As the best sketch of its extent and design, we present the following, which has been compiled from the "Johnstown Tribune," and the "Johnstown Democrat," 1865:

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\*Johnstown Democrat, 1865.

The ground upon which the Works are located embraces seven lots, fronting 350 feet on Portage street and running back 180 feet to the Little Conemaugh. On the northwest corner stands the car and machine shop, the dimensions of which are 136 by 100 feet, the principal entrance being from Portage street. The old foundry stands in line with the new building, a private street about fifty feet wide dividing them. Attached to the foundry is the office. On the northeast corner of the company's grounds is located a new stable, and on the southeast corner there will soon be placed the dwelling-house for the night watchman, which now stands a few rods nearer the foundry. The rest of the space is occupied as a lumber yard and by tracks connecting the foundry with the machine shop.

The plans of the company embrace the tearing down of the foundry building, and the erection in its stead, but at right angles with it, of an entirely new structure, to be 125 feet long, 42 feet wide, 20 feet high to the eaves, and 42 feet to the comb of the roof. This structure is to contain the foundry proper and the blacksmith shop. In the latter will be eight fires. Attached to the eastern end of the building will be an L, 40 feet long by 12 feet

wide, which will contain the founder's cupola and the core oven. The cupola will be large enough to melt four tons of pig metal at one heat. The whole structure will be of brick, covered with slate, and surmounted by an apex twelve feet high, running the whole length.

In the machine shop there are in full operation four lathes for turning iron, one iron planer, two drill presses, one screw-cutting machine, one punching machine, and one casting cleaner. In the wood shop are two circular saws, two planing machines—one a Daniels and the other a Woodworth, one side planer, one sash, moulding and slat machine, one power mortising machine, two cut-off saws, two gig saws, one tenoning machine, one foot mortising machine, one boring and shaping machine, and two wood lathes.

The firm has over \$50,000 invested, and they intend to carry on a foundry, smithshop, machine shop, make railroad cars, manufacture pumps, plane flooring and weather-boarding, make cutting boxes, and, in short, make every thing that a business community desires to be done, all with choice lumber well seasoned by steam. A railroad will pass each side of the building, thus facilitating transportation.

Such are the Johnstown Mechanical Works, past, present, and prospective. The organization of the company, and the tearing down of the old foundry to make room for the improvements we have noted, mark an important era in the history of Johnstown, and help to fix with unerring certainty its destiny as one of the principal manufacturing towns in the Union.

This organization was formed in 1864. Fortune or misfortune forestalled the company in their design of tearing away the old foundry, as mentioned above, for on the night of the 5th of June, 1865, it took fire and burned to the ground. The work of building a new foundry on the extensive scale above described, is in progress.

#### MCCONAUGHY'S STEAM TANNERY.

This establishment stands on the right bank of the Conemaugh, between the bridge and the aqueduct that connect Johnstown proper with Millville borough. It was built by J. P. McConaughy, Esq., in 1861, and supplanted the old establishment that occupied the corner of Walnut and Canal streets, in Johnstown. The chief part of this building is of brick, three stories high, fronting fifty-two feet on Cinder

street, and extending back along the river seventy-five feet. In the rear of this building is a two-story extension of frame, fifty-two by one hundred and twelve feet. Altogether, this is one of the largest buildings in the town.

The ground floor of the front part of this establishment is occupied by vats and the steam engine. The vats are fifty-four in number. The engine is of twenty horse-power, and runs the bark mill, the machinery for rolling the leather, and so forth, and is also used for heating the liquors in the vats. The second story embraces a counting-room, warerooms, and so on. The third story is in one large room, exclusively used as a drying room, except one corner, in which is the rolling machinery. In the frame part are the leaches in which the liquors used in the business are made. The leaches are ten in number. These leaches and vats are all connected together by subterranean conduits. Up-stairs in this building is the bark mill. The rest of this building, as well as a large shed adjacent, is used for stowing bark in. About one thousand cords of bark are used every year.

This establishment annually finishes not less than eight thousand sides of heavy sole leather. This leather is of the very best quality, and is manufactured exclusively for the eastern mar-

ket. This is by far the largest establishment of the kind in this section of country.

### OTHER TANNERIES.

There are numerous other tanneries in the valley of this river. The largest of these, after McCaughy's, we believe, are Levergood's and Dibert's, in Johnstown, the one at Blairsville, and the one at Hillside. Smaller establishments of this kind are to be found in nearly every village in the four counties. Tanning has been largely followed in this part of the country from its earliest settlement. One great incentive thereto has always unquestionably been the abundance of bark to be found on every hand. Within late years the shipping of this article to distant points has been extensively carried on, and it is becoming noticeably scarce where it was formerly to be found in unlimited abundance. It now sells in Johnstown, and other places along the line of the railroad, as high as eight dollars per cord.

### HAWES' CEMENT MILL.

This establishment stands on the left bank of the Conemaugh, a short distance below its



confluence with the Stony Creek, and just at the end of the Iron Bridge. It is situated on a bluff perhaps fifty feet above the water.

A mill for the manufacture of hydraulic cement was established in Johnstown by the Commonwealth a great number of years ago. The cement made by it was used exclusively on the public works. This mill stood at the eastern end of the aqueduct, and was run by water conducted from the canal for that purpose. It was a small affair. It subsequently passed into other hands, and about the year 1852, it was transferred to the spot where it now stands. In 1857, it came into the hands of A. J. Haws, Esq., the present proprietor.

Though this enterprise is known simply as the Cement Mill, it is really something more. In it are made hydraulic cement, fire brick, and ground fire clay. The machinery of the mill is of the most ponderous character, and is run by an eighty horse-power engine. The amount of business annually done at this mill may be set down at 7,500 barrels of cement, 1,200,000 fire brick, and 600 tons of ground fire clay. The ground fire clay is used for making the mortar in which the fire brick are laid.

The material of which the fire brick are made is called whetstone clay, and is found at Min-

eral Point, about nine miles east of the works. In the hill just behind the works is a vein of cement stone, seven feet thick, and resting upon it is a vein of excellent coal three and a half feet thick. Some sixty feet above is another vein of coal two and a half feet thick, and just under it a three foot vein of plastic fire clay. Above these again is another vein of coal four feet thick. Such an abundance of minerals in the near neighborhood makes this one of the very best localities that could be desired for such an establishment. The railroad, passing, as it does, within fifty feet of the mill, affords the best facilities for bringing the whetstone clay to the works, and for exporting the cement, and so forth, to market. The Cambria Iron Works are supplied with fire brick, cement, and ground fire clay by this mill.

#### OIL WELLS.

We have already stated that strong indications of oil exist in the valley of the Cone-maugh. In the search for this article many wells have been sunk. The traveler through this valley will frequently meet with them. Lofty derricks stand throughout the country as plentifully as gibbets in England during

the reign of Queen Elizabeth. They are to be seen by the water-courses, by the roadside, and in lonely fields. They have generally been abandoned, their owners having verified the saying of Banquo—

“The earth hath bubbles as the water has.”

These wells, we believe, are most numerous in the neighborhood of Blairsville. Some of them are promising enterprises, oil having been actually obtained, though as yet not in sufficient quantities to make them profitable. There is no doubt that oil abounds in the valley of this river, and that it will finally be made available by capital and perseverance.

### SAW MILLS.

Saw mills are very numerous in the section of country embraced in the Conemaugh valley. Several of these are extensive enterprises. Lumbering, in the northern part of Indiana and Cambria counties, is a very flourishing and important business. Timber, in nearly every portion of the valley, is sufficiently abundant to render the business of sawing remunerative. Large quantities of hemlock, pine, ash, cherry, and poplar lumber, are exported.

## CHAPTER X.

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### BIOGRAPHICAL.

In this chapter we shall present biographical sketches of some of the prominent early settlers of the Conemaugh valley.

REV. D. A. GALLITZIN.

Rev. Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin died at Loretto on the 6th of May, 1840. For forty-two years he exercised pastoral functions in Cambria county. The venerable deceased was born in 1770, at Munster, in Germany. His father, Prince De Gallitzin, ranked among the highest nobility in Russia. His mother was the daughter of Field Marshal General de Schmeltan, a celebrated officer under Frederick the Great. Her brother fell at the battle of Jena. The deceased held a high commission in the Russian army from his infancy. Europe, in the early part of his life, was desolated by war—the French revolution burst like a volcano upon that convulsed continent: it offered no facilities or attractions for travel, and it was

determined that the young Prince de Gallitzin should visit America. He landed in Baltimore in August, 1782, in company with Rev. Mr. Brosius. By a train of circumstances in which the hand of Providence was strikingly visible, his mind was directed to the ecclesiastical state, and he renounced forever his brilliant prospects. Already endowed with a splendid education, he was the more prepared to pursue his ecclesiastical studies under the venerable Bishop Carroll, at Baltimore, with facility and success. Having completed his theological course, he spent some time on the mission in Maryland.

In the year 1789, he directed his course to the Alleghany mountain, and found that portion of it which now constitutes Cambria county a perfect wilderness, almost without inhabitants or habitations. After incredible labor and privations, and expending a princely fortune, he succeeded in making "the wilderness blossom as a rose." His untiring zeal has collected about Loretto, his late residence, a Catholic population of three or four thousand. He not only extended the church by his missionary toils, but also illustrated and defended the truth by several highly useful publications. His "Defence of Catholic Principles" has gained merited celebrity both here and in Europe.

In this extraordinary man we have not only to admire his renunciation of the brightest hopes and prospects; his indefatigable zeal—but something greater and rarer—his wonderful humility. No one could ever learn from him or his mode of life, what he had been, or what he had exchanged for privation and poverty.

To intimate to him that you were aware of his condition, would be sure to pain and displease him. He who might have reveled in the princely halls of his ancestors, was content to spend thirty years in a rude log cabin, almost denying himself the common comforts of life, that he might be able to clothe the naked members of Jesus Christ, the poor and distressed. Few have left behind them such examples of charity and benevolence. On the head of no one have been invoked so many blessings from the mouths of widows and orphans. It may be literally said of him “if his heart had been made of gold he would have disposed of it all in charity to the poor.”\*

To this sketch may be properly appended the following:

Princess Amalia Gallitzin, a lady distinguished for talent and a strong propensity to mysticism. She was the daughter of count

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\* Mountaineer, May 14, 1840.



Schmeltan, and lived, during a part of her youth, at the court of the wife of prince Ferdinand, brother of Frederick the Great. She was married to the Russian prince, Gallitzin; and, as much of his time was passed in traveling, she chose Munster, in the center of Germany, for her permanent residence. Here she assembled around her some of the most distinguished men of the age, Hemsterhuis, Hamann, Jacobi, Gœthe, Furstenberg, and others. The two first were her most intimate friends. She was an ardent Catholic, and strongly given to making proselytes. With the exception of her excessive religious zeal, she was an excellent lady in every respect. In the education of her children, she followed Rousseau's system. The princess is the *Diotima* to whom Hemsterhuis, under the name of *Dioklas*, addressed his work *On Atheism*. She died, in 1806, near Munster. Her only son was a missionary in America.\*

#### GENERAL ARTHUR ST. CLAIR.

General St. Clair was born at Edinburg, in Scotland, and accompanied the fleet under Admiral Boscawen to America, in 1755. He

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\* *Encyclopædia Americana*, Vol. V. p. 361.

was a lieutenant in the British army under General Wolfe. When the French war was closed, he had command of Fort Ligonier assigned to him; and also received a grant of one thousand acres of land in that vicinity, which he fancifully chose to lay out in the form of a circle. Here he settled, and was appointed to several civil offices under the government of Pennsylvania. When the Revolution commenced, he embraced the American cause, and in January, 1776, was appointed to command a battalion of Pennsylvania militia. He was engaged in the expedition to Canada, and was second in command in the proposed attack on the British post at Trois Rivières. He was afterwards in the battle of Trenton, and had the credit of suggesting the attack on the British at Princeton, which proved so fortunate. In August, 1776, he was appointed a brigadier, and in February, 1777, major-general. He was the commanding officer at Ticonderoga when that post was invested by the British, and evacuated it July 6, 1777, with such secrecy that a considerable part of the public stores were safely conveyed away. Charges of cowardice, treachery, and incapacity were brought against him in consequence, but a court of inquiry

honorably acquitted him. He afterwards joined the army under General Greene, in the south, and at the close of the war returned to his former residence. In 1783, he was a member of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania, and the same year was elected president of the Cincinnati Society, of that State. In 1785, he was elected to Congress, and in February, 1787, was appointed president of that body. In October following, he was appointed governor of the territory of the United States northwest of the Ohio, an office which he retained until November, 1803, when he was removed by Jefferson in consequence of the too free expression of his political opinions. He had previously, in 1790, been the unsuccessful candidate of the federal party, against Gen. Mifflin, for the office of governor of Pennsylvania, under the new constitution. In 1791, he commanded an army against the Miami Indians, and was defeated on the 4th of November, with the loss of six or seven hundred men. He was on that occasion worn down by a fever, but nevertheless exerted himself with a courage and presence of mind worthy of a better fate. He was borne on a litter to the different points of the battleground, and in this condition directed the

movements of the troops. On this occasion a portion of the citizens were loud in their censure of his conduct; but a committee of inquiry of the House of Representatives acquitted him from blame. He resigned his commission as major-general in 1792. With the profuse liberality of a soldier, he became reduced in his old age to poverty, and resided in a dreary part of Westmoreland county, on the Chestnut Ridge, a little south of the turnpike. He applied to Congress for relief. His claims on the sympathy of his country were listened to with indifference, and admitted with reluctance. After a long suspense, he obtained a pension of sixty dollars per month. He died August 31st, 1818, in his eighty-fourth year.\*

RICHARD B. McCABE, ESQ.

Richard Butler McCabe, Esq., first saw the light in the county of Cumberland, now Perry, in Pennsylvania, on the 5th day of August, 1792. His grandfather, Owen McCabe—in the Colonial Records erroneously called McKibe—was a native of Tyrone county, Ireland, and came to this country at an early age. His first

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\* Day's Hist. Col. pp. 686, 687.

home was in Lancaster county, where he intermarried with Catharine Sears, and subsequently moved with his wife and eldest son, James, the father of Richard, to Sherman's Valley; these two were the first white men who settled in the valley. Their settlement was named Tyrone township, in memory of the childhood's home of the elder McCabe. Tyrone Iron Works and Tyrone City, on the Central Railroad, also derive their name from the same hardy pioneer.

The life of a settler in that unprotected frontier country, constantly exposed to hostile incursions of Indians, full of peril and hardships of every kind, was well calculated to educate him to endure with patience and fortitude the toils and privations of camp life. When the War of Independence broke out, the brave old pioneer, with two hardy and stalwart sons, Robert and William, in company with Nicholas Hughs, Richard's maternal grandfather, and two equally gallant sons, shouldered arms and went to Bunker Hill. This event was celebrated at the time in verse, by a rustic poet of the neighborhood.

From the family of the deceased's mother descended the founders of many distinguished and wealthy families of the south and west.

James McCabe, the father of Richard, was regarded by his cotemporaries as a man of the purest integrity, scrupulously conscientious in all his dealings, brave, kind, and generous. Before Forbes approached Fort Duquesne, or Armstrong burnt Kittanning, a company was formed at or near Carlisle, the first that ever, in Pennsylvania, pursued the Indians as far as the Alleghany Mountains. James McCabe was a lieutenant in that company. The Indians had been down in Sherman's Valley, plundering, capturing, and destroying. The company pursued them as far as the heads of Blacklick, in Cambria county; here they halted, being without guides, and not knowing how many foes they might have to encounter west of the mountains, and turning back, started for the Muncey towns, on the Susquehanna.

In 1795, the father of Richard died, leaving the child in the exclusive care and control of the widowed mother. The population being sparse, she was almost his only companion, and nobly did she perform the sacred duty which her Heavenly Father had assigned her.

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The period of his early boyhood passed; he left his quiet and romantic home in the coun-



try, and was bound an apprentice to a carpenter; but not liking this occupation, he went to Philadelphia. The war of 1812, having just broken out, he entered himself on board a privateer which was about starting on a cruise; but one of his brothers learning the facts, prevented his departure. This was a most fortunate occurrence, as the vessel proved to be a pirate craft. Thus diverted from his purpose, he went to Richmond, Va., where, it is thought, he read law for a short time. Returning again to the interior of Pennsylvania, he became clerk in a store. In 1815, he went to Pittsburg, passing through this county, [Indiana,] then almost a wilderness; there he entered a counting house, but soon returning to the country, he passed a few years as clerk, and finally manager, of several iron works.

Marrying about 1820, he removed to Harrisburg, where he entered the office of the Secretary of State. While thus engaged, he returned to the study of the law, under the supervision of the Attorney General of the State, Mr. Elder. After his admission to the bar, he went to Huntingdon, and commenced his professional career. Subsequently he removed to this county, where he resided until his death—a period of more than thirty years.

He enjoyed for the most of the time a lucrative practice. During one term he served as prothonotary of the county, and performed the duties of the office to the entire satisfaction of his fellow citizens. His antiquarian researches were extensive; no man knew more of the early history of our State. He was a frequent contributor to the periodical and newspaper literature of his time; his style of composition was simple and unadorned. He was an admirable writer of narrative, and his Brady, and other sketches, found in almost all histories of Pennsylvania, are well known to every school boy. At the close of his life he was engaged upon a biography of the Priest of the Alleghany Mountains, the Russian prince, Gallitzin, which promised to be a most charming and interesting work.

In his social intercourse, Mr. McCabe was kind and obliging. His charity knew no bounds; he gave freely, without hope, desire, or expectation of reward. He did not permit his left hand to know what his right did, and many a widow and orphan had cause to bless, without knowing who was the benefactor. Modest almost to a fault, he abhorred parade and show, and desired that his place of burial should not be marked with stone or monu-

ment, only by trees and flowers. In the family circle he was uniformly kind, gentle, and cheerful, never permitting an ill-natured word against a neighbor to be spoken in his presence without rebuke. In politics and religion, he was much in advance of the present age. He spoke with scornful contempt of the tricks of mere politicians. No inducements of worldly advancement or fortune were sufficient to seduce him for a moment from the path of rectitude. No man can justly charge him with a single departure from truth and honor. He died January 10th, 1860, in the eighty-eighth year of his age.\*

#### HON. MOSES CANAN.

The old men, whose histories connect the present generation with the past, are rapidly passing away. Soon the last one, whose birth dates back into the previous century, will be gone.

Conspicuous among this class of deaths is that of Hon. Moses Canan, who died September 29, 1863, in the 80th year of his age, more than half of whose long life was spent in Cambria county, in active participation in all things

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\* Blairsville Record, Jan. 25, 1860.

connected with the prosperity of its people. This fact will justify us in occupying more than the usual space, in our paper, in giving a sketch of the life and character of the deceased.

Judge Canan was born in Huntingdon county, Pa., March 1st, 1784. After enjoying the advantages of the best schools in the borough of Huntingdon, at the age of sixteen he entered Dickinson College at Carlisle, and enjoyed the advantages of that excellent institution for four years. He then entered the law office of Judge Rawle, of Philadelphia, and pursued his studies there for three years. In 1807, he was admitted to the bar, soon after married, and at once entered into an extensive and lucrative practice in Huntingdon and adjoining counties.

A short time prior to the breaking out of the war of 1812, the young attorney had located himself on a beautiful farm on the "blue Juniata," near Alexandria, in his native county, and devoted a portion of his time to agricultural pursuits. Surrounded by all the luxuries of life, in the receipt of an ample income, enjoying all the bliss and happiness of domestic life in the society of his youthful companion and two little daughters, his was a home ardently to be desired. But, in the midst of all this domestic bliss, he heard his country call for

brave men to repel an insolent foe, that would trail, in foul dishonor, the glorious emblem of his country's greatness. In answer to the call he voluntarily forsook the comforts of home, the society of his loved ones, and organizing a company of volunteers, composed of his kinsmen and his boyhood companions, in the winter of 1812-13, marched to the Niagara frontier.

His love of military life was always of the most ardent kind, and he freely contributed of his time and means in forming and keeping up military organizations. For many years he was major of a battalion, Cambria county volunteers. He organized, and for years commanded, the "Cambria Guards," a company of the "Frosty Sons of Thunder," which was the germ from which sprang a company that aided in planting the stars and stripes in the "Halls of the Montezumas," as well as another which has nobly defended the old flag, in many a hard fought battle, since the commencement of the present unholy rebellion.

So strong was the love of the deceased for military life, and so true his patriotism and devotion to country, that the infirmities of age, alone, prevented him from again buckling on his sword, and rushing to the defence of the old flag when wantonly assailed by domestic

traitors. Although too old to take an active part, his sympathies and his prayers were with and for his country, and to his latest hour he indulged the fond hope that the Union would be preserved.

He attended the first court held in Cambria county, in 1807, and for more than fifty years, with one or two exceptions, was present at every term. In the spring of 1818, he took up his residence at Ebensburg, and became fully identified with all the interests of the county. His practice at this time, and for many years subsequently, was very large in Cambria and adjoining counties. He was retained on every important suit, and was proverbial for the great care with which he prepared his cases, and for the fidelity with which he watched over the interests of his clients. His even temper, sociability, and kindness of heart made him a favorite with all the members of the bar. He retained their esteem during a long life, and, as a body, they followed him to the tomb.

Extensive as was his practice, and greatly occupied as was his time in the duties of his profession, yet his great industry—his willingness to work late and early, connected with his regularity of habits, enabled him to devote considerable time to literary pursuits. For about 30 years he was more or less connected



with the editorial department of some one of the county papers. He was frequently called upon to deliver Fourth of July orations, and lectures upon different subjects. In the preparation of his editorials, orations, and lectures, he bestowed great care. His style, as a writer, was concise and pointed, and his productions will compare favorably with those of the best writers of his day.

In all things calculated to secure the improvement of the material condition of the county, he freely gave his time and money. Ever anxious to elevate the moral condition of the people, his voice, his pen, and his purse, were always freely employed in advocating and supporting all movements in that direction. But, prominent among all others, was his desire to improve the intellectual condition of the people. His efforts in this behalf were unceasing, and the results were such as to redound to his credit, and should cause, not only his family, but the present and future generations, to revere his memory. Through his efforts an academy was established at the county seat, endowed by the State, and supplied with the best teachers the country could afford. This institution gave to the country many young men who have since distinguished themselves in the pulpit, at the bar, in the

army, and in the varied duties of life. Upon the first introduction of the free school system it was violently opposed. In the front ranks of its friends stood Judge Canan, who, sacrificing political preferment, and every selfish consideration, freely committed himself to the task of defending the system and laboring for its success. For many years he was a member of the Board of School Directors, and lived to see the system overcome the violent opposition of its enemies, and secure an abiding place in the affections of the people.

A long life, usefully spent, is now ended. The faithful attorney and upright judge—the useful citizen and pure philanthropist—the kind husband and indulgent father—the devoted patriot and consistent christian—has departed. It can be truly said, he died as he lived, *without an enemy*. He is gone from our midst, but the memory of his usefulness—his kindness of heart—his devotion to his country, his family, and his God—will live after him.\*

HON. JOHN CUNNINGHAM.

John Cunningham was born near New London, Chester county, Pa., February 17, 1794.

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\* Cambria Tribune, October 30, 1863.

About three years afterwards he moved to Kishacoquillas valley, Mifflin county, and there, at the age of sixteen, it was his misfortune to be left fatherless; from that day he was cast upon his own resources, not only for his own maintenance, but, being the oldest son, for the maintenance also of a dependant mother and several brothers and sisters. He at once devoted himself to learning a trade, and, this accomplished, he labored for several years as a journeyman to obtain the means to support his mother and her family. In the spring of 1818, he removed to this county [Indiana]; and in the fall of the same year, took up his residence in this town. Having made a profession of religion before he came here, he at once identified himself with the few in the neighborhood who loved the Savior; through his influence, in part, a prayer-meeting was established and kept up, and occasional preaching secured, until in September, 1822, the Presbyterian Church of West Union (the name and location were afterwards changed to Blairsville,) was established. From that day to this our departed father has been identified with the existence and prosperity of this church. He was one of the original thirty-three who covenanted

with each other and with God to walk together as a Church of Christ. Of these but five or six are now on earth; but three are now members of this church, and but one of them has been connected with it all the time since its foundation, at the organization of the church. Mr. Cunningham, though then comparatively a young man, was chosen and ordained one of its Ruling Elders. This office he held for nearly forty-three years, and how well and faithfully he discharged his duties, you are all witnesses. Pre-eminently wise in counsel, prudent in action, self-denying in labor, and spiritual in heart, he was almost from the first, and has ever continued to be, the recognized leader and main dependence of the Session. For thirty years he was the superintendent, and almost the life, of the Sabbath School. He was for a much longer period the centre around which the prayer-meeting lived and had its being. He has been the main pillar of this part of the church of Christ: the head, the father of this congregation, to whom we all looked with the confidence and affection of children; and now, as our eyes follow his prepared flight, we instinctively cry, with the anguish of a bereaved Elisha, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horse-

man thereof!" On whom shall the mantle of our departing Elijah fall? Help, Lord, for the goodly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men.

Not less closely has our venerated father been connected with the growth of this town. He came here when the place where Blairsville now stands, was an almost unbroken forest. He built and used as a workshop the second tenement which was erected in it, and cut with his hand-axe a path diagonally across the town (a town then only on paper) from his own lot to the lot of Mrs. Shields, which contained the only other house in the place. From that day to this he has been identified with the material, intellectual, moral, and religious welfare of the town. He had a large part in all plans and labors for its improvement. He was trusted and honored by his fellow-citizens by being called to a large share of the official duties connected with the government.

Nor was his influence circumscribed by the limits of his own immediate borough and neighborhood, The county and the State felt it; the dignity and honor with which for a number of years he filled the position of Associate Judge was one of the ways in which this influence was exerted. It is not too much to

say, that such were his endowments of mind that if he had enjoyed in early life the advantages of education which are now within the reach of every child in the State, his name would have been known and his influence largely felt in the councils of the nation. He was possessed of a wise and large hearted patriotism. No man who has passed from earth since the struggles of our country with perfidious treason and gigantic rebellion began, has left a fairer record on this point than he. I do not consider it improper here to say that I know the joyful satisfaction and honest pride he felt, when two of his sons went out as representatives of the family in the armies of the nation. "You are doing right. It is your duty to go—it is the duty of all to go who can." These were his unselfish—his right loyal—his noble words. Such were his feelings at the commencement of the war, and they remained unchanged, except in ever-increasing intensity, to the last. It was with him a cause of devout thankfulness to God that he lived, like our martyred President, to see rebellion receive its death blow, and to behold his country rise in majesty and glory above the dark clouds that have for years enveloped her. Such was he as a citizen, and altogether it is



no disparagement to others to say, that no man has held a higher place in the confidence and esteem of all who knew him than he, that none was more beloved, especially by the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the afflicted than he. The natural traits of his character were marked. They were gravity, integrity, firmness, straightforwardness, candor, generosity, benevolence, humility. These natural endowments were largely sanctified and directed by divine grace. His religious character was one of great symmetry and consistency. It was one which pre-eminently approved itself to the judgment of all who knew him. It bore successfully the applications of that severest of tests given by the Great Master himself. "By their fruits ye shall know them." It was not one which depended for the demonstration of its genuineness on frames and feelings and ecstasies. He died April 26, 1865, in the 72d year of his age.\*

#### CHRISTIAN HORNER, Esq.

Christian Horner, Esq., died at his residence, in Jenner township, Somerset county, on Friday, the 6th of October, 1865. Born in Frank-

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\* From a Discourse by Rev. George Hill, of Blairsville.

lin county, on the 25th day of January, 1778, he was, therefore, 87 years, 8 months and 12 days old at the date of his death.

Mr. Horner was married the first time in 1799, by Rev. Mr. Stoy, the founder of Stoystown, in Somerset county. The same year he removed within the present limits of Cambria county, and first located near where the reservoir now is. He was compelled to camp out with his family, under a tree, till he had a cabin erected to protect them from the winter. This was the year before Johnstown was laid out by Joseph Johns, and several years before Cambria county was erected. Subsequently, 'Squire Horner, as he was familiarly called, removed to the farm on which Joseph Geis now lives, in Richland township, and within three miles of Johnstown. Here he resided till 1847, when he removed to Somerset county. Mr. Horner, in common with the residents of Cambria county, at that early day, had to endure great hardships. Salt could not be procured at any nearer point than Bloody Run, in Bedford county. Here the settlers, their only road a narrow bridle path, would annually resort, and exchange their furs for iron and salt, and then lead their horses, laden with these necessary articles, over the mountains to their

homes, in the then wilderness. Salt at that day cost four dollars per bushel, and money was much scarcer than greenbacks are now.

John Horner, the father of Christian Horner, at an early day, dedicated the lot on the bank of Stony Creek, now adjoining Sandy Vale Cemetery, as a family burying ground. The first person buried in this lot, was a daughter of Christian Horner, who died some time in the year 1800.

In 1809, Gov. Snyder commissioned Mr. Horner a Justice of the Peace for Conemaugh township, Cambria county. It will give some idea of Esq. Horner's jurisdiction, when we state the fact that Conemaugh township then embraced the territory in which are now included the townships of Conemaugh, Croyle, Summerhill, Jackson, Taylor, Yoder, and Richland, and the boroughs of Johnstown, Conemaugh, Prospect, Millville, Cambria, and Wilmore. This office he held until his removal to Somerset county, in 1847.

Mr. Horner was married the second time in 1828, and leaves a widow to survive him at the age of 82 years. He had in all fifteen children, eleven of whom are living. He also leaves one hundred and seventeen grand-children, and one hundred and two great grand-children to mourn his death.

Esq. Horner's remains were brought to this place, and interred in the Horner family burying ground, where his daughter has slept for 65 years, on Monday, the 9th inst. A large number of our citizens turned out to pay their last tribute of respect to his memory.

Thus, at a ripe old age, has passed away another of Cambria's pioneers. Soon the last will be gone, and then will perish much that ought to be carefully gathered for the pages of history. A narrative of the trials undergone, and the scenes witnessed by Mr. Horner, in the early days of the settlement of this county, would make a volume at once eloquent and thrilling, a volume which our sons and daughters could read with far more profit, than anything presented in the pages of fiction. We little know, and still less appreciate the toils, the privations, the dangers, our fathers endured, in order that they might make this wilderness "bloom and blossom as the rose" for us. Honor to their memory! Peace to their ashes!\*

SAMUEL SEYMOUR.

With the name of Samuel Seymour, but few

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\*Johnstown Democrat, Oct. 18, 1865.

of the present citizens of Johnstown are familiar; though in his day he was a conspicuous man in this community, and will be remembered by some of my older readers.

Mr. Seymour was a citizen of one of the eastern States, and was by profession an artist. I use the term artist in the sense in which it was used fifty years ago, and not as applied to daguerreotypists, photographers, and so forth. He was a skillful and talented disciple of Angelo and Rembrandt, of Reynolds and West.

In the early part of this century, he accompanied the expedition of Colonel Long to the Rocky Mountains. That part of our country which is now included in the States of Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, and others, was then almost a *terra incognita*. It was a soil that had scarcely been pressed by the foot of a white man. Mr. Seymour, desirous of transferring to his canvas the wonders and beauties of that hitherto unrevealed region, and of seeking adventures of a new and thrilling character in those western wilds, forsook the ease and safety of home and friends, and volunteered in that arduous undertaking. He ascended with Col. Long the towering peak that still bears his name, and that stands, as it will ever stand, a

giant sentinel to guard the route to the Pacific shores. The drawings which illustrated Col. Long's narrative of his expedition, were by the pencil of Mr. Seymour. He was an engraver as well as painter, and his name may be found in many of the illustrated works of forty or fifty years ago.

The few works of Mr. Seymour that have descended to our day, show him to have been a man of exquisite taste and culture. One of his oil paintings is in the possession of the writer. It represents a young lady—whether it is a portrait, or a mere fancy-sketch, perhaps will never be known.

"She sits, inclining forward as to speak,  
Her lips half open, and her finger up,  
As though she said, 'Beware!'"

The latter years of Mr. Seymour's life were spent in Blairsville and Johnstown. In the former town he made the acquaintance of the writer's father, who was also an artist, and became a frequent visitor at his house.

About the year 1832, perhaps, he came to Johnstown, where he continued to reside until the period of his death, which occurred in May, 1834. He was aged about 50 years. He died in extreme poverty; for it is a singular fact, that genius and wealth are rarely found together. Where Mr. Seymour was buried is



not known to the writer. . A few months ago, he, in company with a friend, searched among the old monuments in the Union Graveyard for his tomb, but was unable to find it. If he was buried there, as in all probability he was, there is no mark by which his last resting place may be distinguished.

Pittsburg is taking measures to erect a suitable monument to the memory of her painter, Blythe, a man of similar genius and misfortunes; should not Johnstown make an effort to perpetuate the name of the great artist who died and lies buried within her limits?

THE END.



May 20 1900

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